

**Phase IA Historical Documentary Report and Archaeological
Assessment of the Woodlawn Dog Run, Van Cortlandt Park, Van
Cortlandt Park East at Oneida Avenue, Borough of the Bronx, New
York (X092-113M)**



Prepared for

City of New York Department of Parks and Recreation
Queens, New York

and

City of New York Landmarks Preservation Commission
New York, New York

Prepared by

Alyssa Loorya, M.A., M.Phil., R.P.A.,
Diane George, J.D., M.A., R.P.A.
Christopher Ricciardi, Ph.D., R.P.A.
Chrysalis Archaeological Consultants, Inc.

February 2015

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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

Chrysalis Archaeological Consultants (Chrysalis) was contracted by the City of New York - Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks), to undertake a Phase IA Documentary Study and Archaeological Assessment for the proposed Woodlawn Dog Run at Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx, Bronx County, New York (X092-113M). As the project is funded by the City of New York, it must comply with existing regulations the [New York] City Environmental Quality Review Act (CEQRA) and the City of New York – Landmarks Preservation Commission’s Guidelines for Archaeological Research.

The purpose of this study is to provide documentary history and information in order to determine the archaeological sensitivity of the site. Specifically, the study will determine if the site might contain previously undisturbed, *in situ*, cultural resource deposits that would be impacted by the proposed development and provides a recommendation for further study, should the potential exist for disturbance to buried cultural resources.

In the course of this investigation, the following research collections were utilized: the City of New York - Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NY SHPO), the City of New York - Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks), the New York Public Library, the New York Historical Society, the Bronx Historical Society, and other institutions.

Alyssa Loorya, M.A., M.Phil., R.P.A., and Diane George, J.D., M.A., R.P.A. authored the report, which was edited by Christopher Ricciardi, Ph.D., R.P.A.. Eileen Kao provided mapping assistance. All work was performed in accordance with the LPC, NY SHPO and New York Archaeological Council guidelines and regulations.

The Woodlawn Dog Run Project proposes the construction of a new dog run in Van Cortlandt Park, located in the Bronx (Bronx County), New York. Van Cortlandt Park, the third largest park in New York City, which lies immediately south of the Yonkers/New York City border and consists of approximately 1,146 acres of parkland. The Park’s northern boundary is formed by the New York City/Westchester County line. Its eastern side is irregular and is bordered by Van Cortlandt Park East, 233rd Street, and Jerome Avenue. The latter street separates the Park from Woodlawn Cemetery. West Gun Hill Road, Van Cortlandt Park South, and West 240th Street form the southern boundary of the Park, and Broadway comprises its western boundary. Tibbets Brook runs north to south through the middle of the Park, with Van Cortlandt Lake at its south end. The Croton Aqueduct, which brings water to New York City from upstate New York, passes directly through the park property. Van Cortlandt Mansion, located in the western portion of the Park, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and is a National and a New York City Landmark. It is currently operated as a Historic House Museum by the National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York in coordination and cooperation with Parks and the Historic House Trust of New York City (HHT).

Throughout the general project area, prehistoric and historic sites have been identified and excavated. The overall area of Van Cortlandt Park retains a high potential for the recovery of Native American and Historic resources.

Based on the proposed project plans, the nature of the topography and being within a sensitive archaeological area, it is recommended that Phase IB Archaeological Field Testing and Monitoring occur as part of the project.

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I. INTRODUCTION

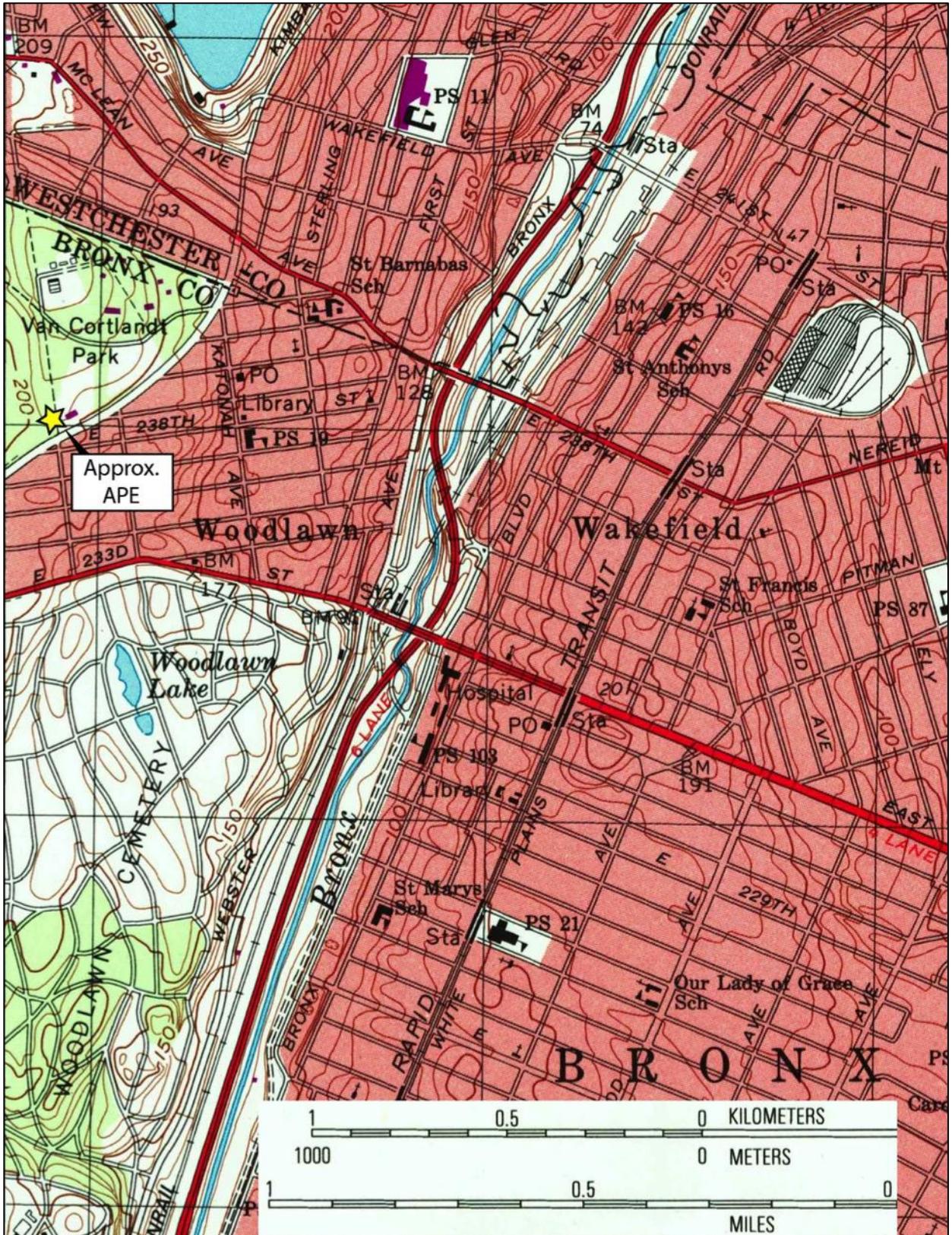
The City of New York - Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks) has proposed the construction of a dog run within Van Cortlandt Park (VCP) located in the Bronx (Bronx County), New York (Map 01). The Woodlawn Dog Run Project is being funded with City funding and as such must comply with the [New York] City Environmental Quality Review Act of 1977, as amended (CEQRA) and the City of New York – Landmarks Preservation Commission’s (LPC) Guidelines for Archaeological Research (LPC 2002). Chrysalis Archaeological Consultants (Chrysalis) has been retained by Parks to produce a Phase IA Documentary Study and Archaeological Assessment as part of these requirements.

The purpose of this study is to determine the sensitivity of the project area with regard to cultural resources both extant and buried, as it relates to the proposed action by Parks. The study will provide recommendations for further study should the potential to impact to cultural resources exist.

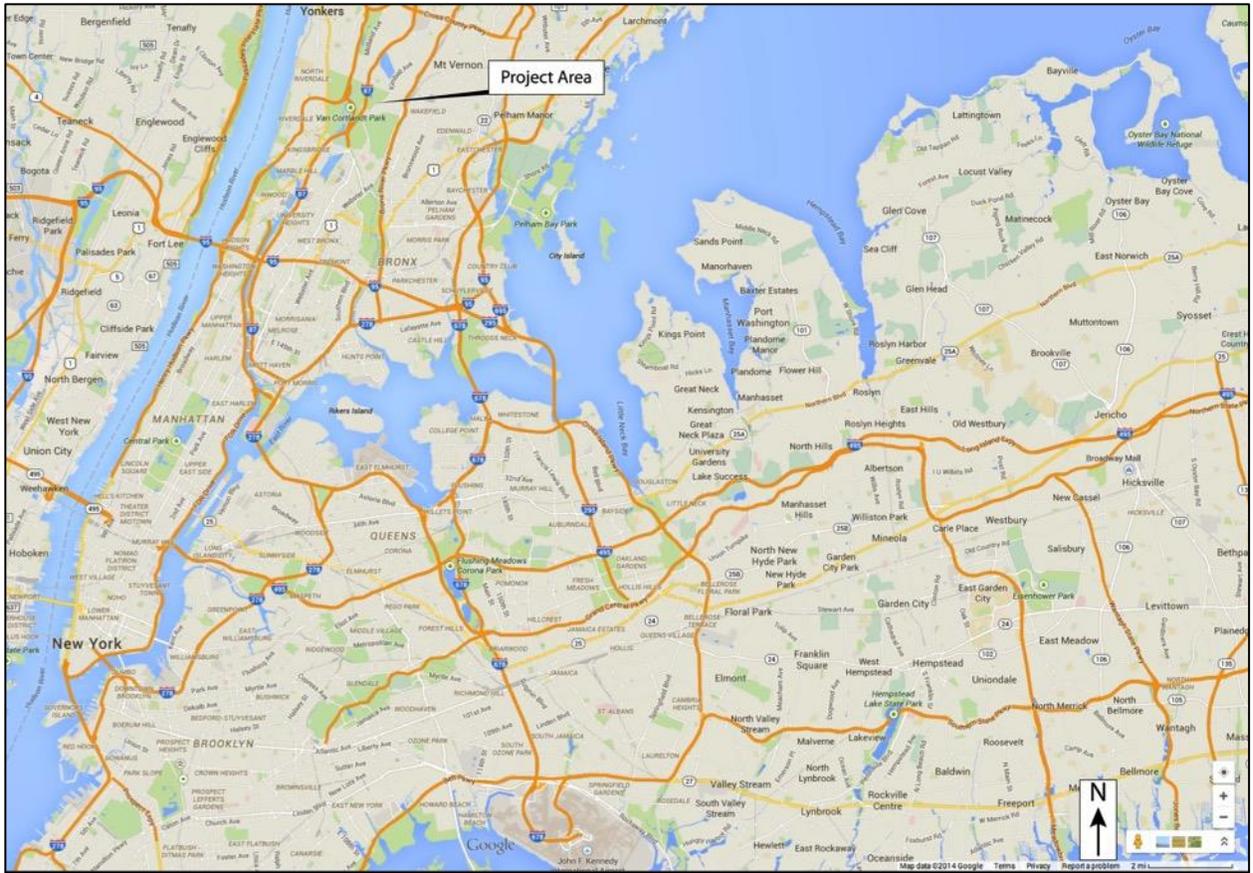
In the course of this investigation, the following research collections were utilized: the LPC, the New York Public Library, the New York Historical Society, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NY SHPO) and others institutions.

Alyssa Loorya, M.A. MPhil., R.P.A., and Diane George, M.A., MPhil., R.P.A., J.D., served as authors of this report, which was edited by Christopher Ricciardi, Ph.D. R.P.A.. All work was performed in accordance with the LPC, NY SHPO and the New York Archaeological Council (NYAC) guidelines and regulations (LPC 2002, NYAC 1994, 2000, 2002).

The Woodlawn Dog Run Project (the Project) proposes the construction of a new dog run in Van Cortlandt Park, located in the Bronx (Bronx County), New York. Van Cortlandt Park, the third largest park in New York City, lies immediately south of the Yonkers/New York City border (Map 02). It is a roughly rectangular area consisting of 1,146 acres of parkland, and includes playgrounds, tennis and bocce courts, playing fields, a Parade Ground, a golf course, and a nursery. The Park’s northern boundary is formed by the New York City/Westchester County line. Its eastern side is irregular and is bordered by Van Cortlandt Park East, 233rd Street, and Jerome Avenue. The latter street separates the Park from Woodlawn Cemetery. West Gun Hill Road, Van Cortlandt Park South and West 240th Street form the southern boundary of the Park, and Broadway comprises its western boundary. Tibbets Brook runs north to south through the middle of the Park, with Van Cortlandt Lake at its south end. The Croton Aqueduct, which brings water to New York City from upstate New York, passes directly through the park property. Three major highways intersect the Park: the Major Deegan Expressway, the Mosholu Parkway and the Henry Hudson Parkway. Van Cortlandt Mansion, located in the western portion of the Park, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and is a National and a New York City Landmark. It is currently operated as a Historic House Museum by the National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York in coordination and cooperation with Parks and the Historic House Trust of New York City (HHT).



Map 01: USGS Map of the Project Area. *Yonkers, New York Quad* (United States Geological Survey 1998).



Map 02: Project location within New York City (Google Maps 2014).

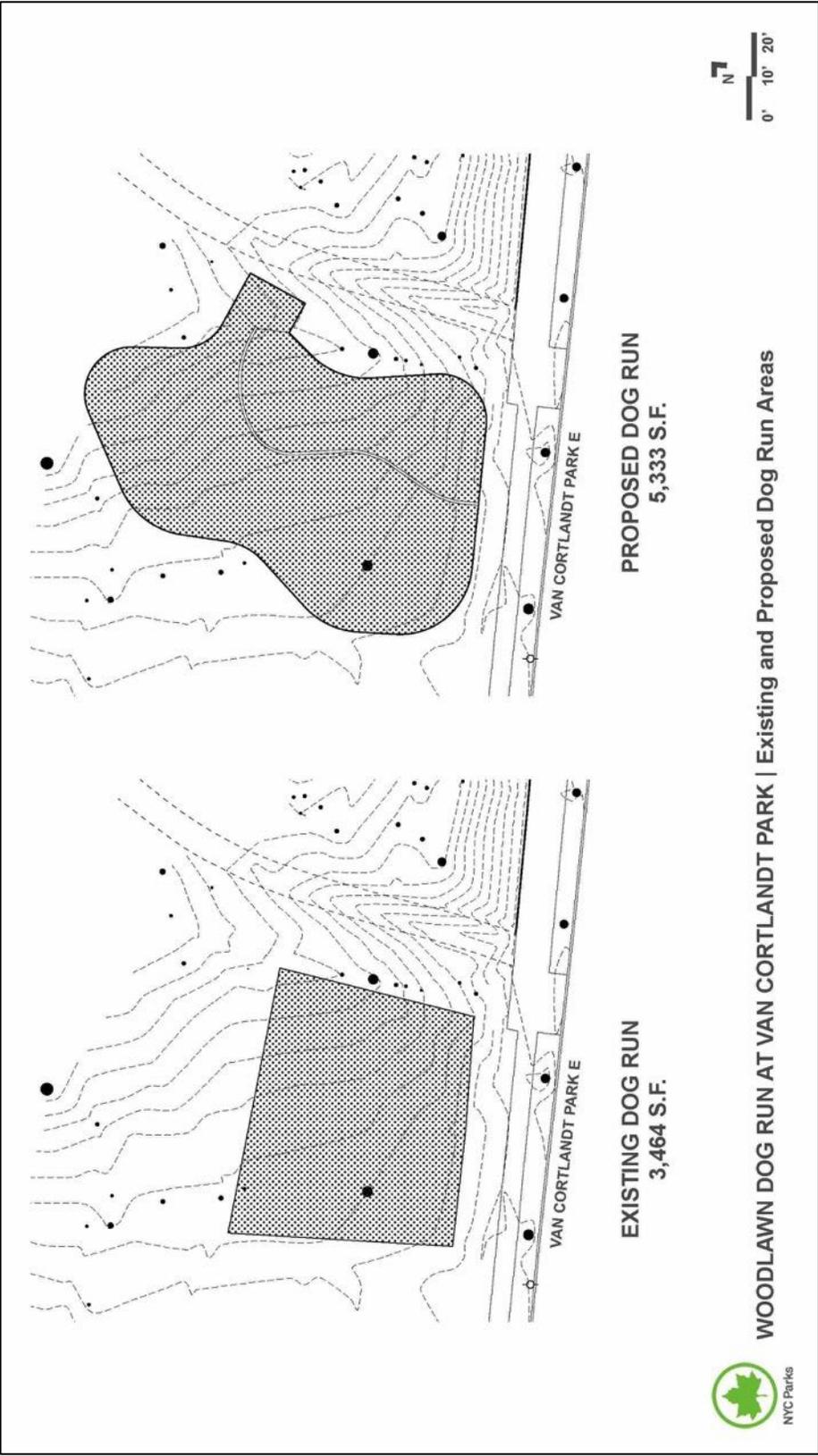
II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Woodlawn dog run is located at the edge of the northeast forested area of Van Cortlandt Park, adjacent to the John Muir Trail. Alternate locations were explored for the dog run, and after careful assessment of existing trees and the surrounding area, the dog run will remain in its current location.

The Project is still in the planning stages, but the proposed design will increase the size of the dog run to approximately 5,000 square feet (sq. ft.) while creating separate areas for small and large dogs. At the entrance to the John Muir Trail, asphalt pavement and a handrail will formalize the area, along with making the entrance ADA compliant. The entrance from the sidewalk will be further delineated by boulders and landscaping. The existing steel guide rail will be replaced with a timber barrier rail and removable wood bollards for a naturalized look, preventing access by unauthorized vehicles. The budget allows for the new timber barrier rail to run along the sidewalk in front of the dog run, and extend 20' on the right side of the John Muir trail in order to provide for a pleasant entry experience. The existing John Muir trail head sign will not be replaced; the location is to remain the same as when established by volunteers in 1997. The proposed dog run will be enclosed by a 4'-high black chain link fence with a smaller than standard mesh size for small dogs. The pavement within the dog run will be brown stone screenings. In order to provide a fairly flat grade, naturalized stone stair treads will accommodate the grade difference (Parks 2015) (Map 03 and 04).

All design elements took into consideration the location of the dog run at the edge of a naturalized forested area. The timber barrier rail, wood bollards, and boulders along the edge of the entry trail reinforce the rural character of the park. The entry trail will be reconstructed in asphalt; its curvilinear shape attempts to avoid critical root zones of existing trees while elongating the path to reduce the slope and provide ADA access to the dog run. There are currently a variety of benches within the Park. The Central Park Settee bench will be used in the dog run. It appears in several historic photos of Van Cortlandt Park and is to be instituted as the standard bench in the park as new projects develop (Parks 2015).

The construction plans were not available for review; however, based on communication with Parks, much of the site will realize less than 12" of excavation. The deepest impacts will occur in the northern portion of the project area where curbs will be installed. The excavation for curbs, as per Parks' standard methods, is 12". The only exception to this are areas where soil will be retained, which will increase the excavation impact to 24". Figure 01 shows the proposed cut/excavation work that will be undertaken. The removal of trees in the forested area may involve deeper impacts depending on the method of tree stump removal.



Map 03: Existing and Proposed Dog Run Areas (Parks 2014).



WOODLAWN DOG RUN AT VAN CORTLANDT PARK | Proposed Site Plan

Map 04: Proposed Dog Run Site Plan (Parks 2014).

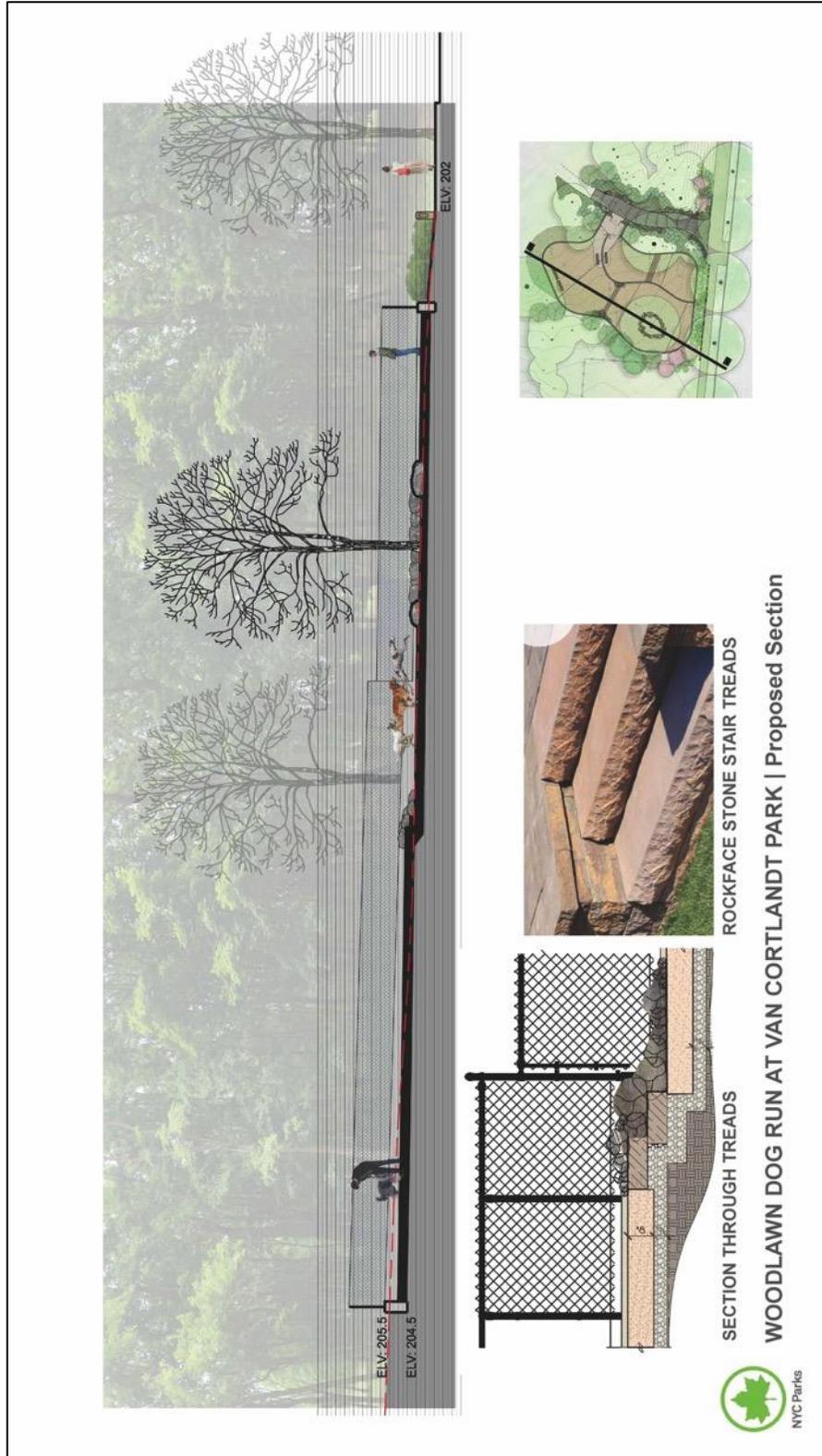
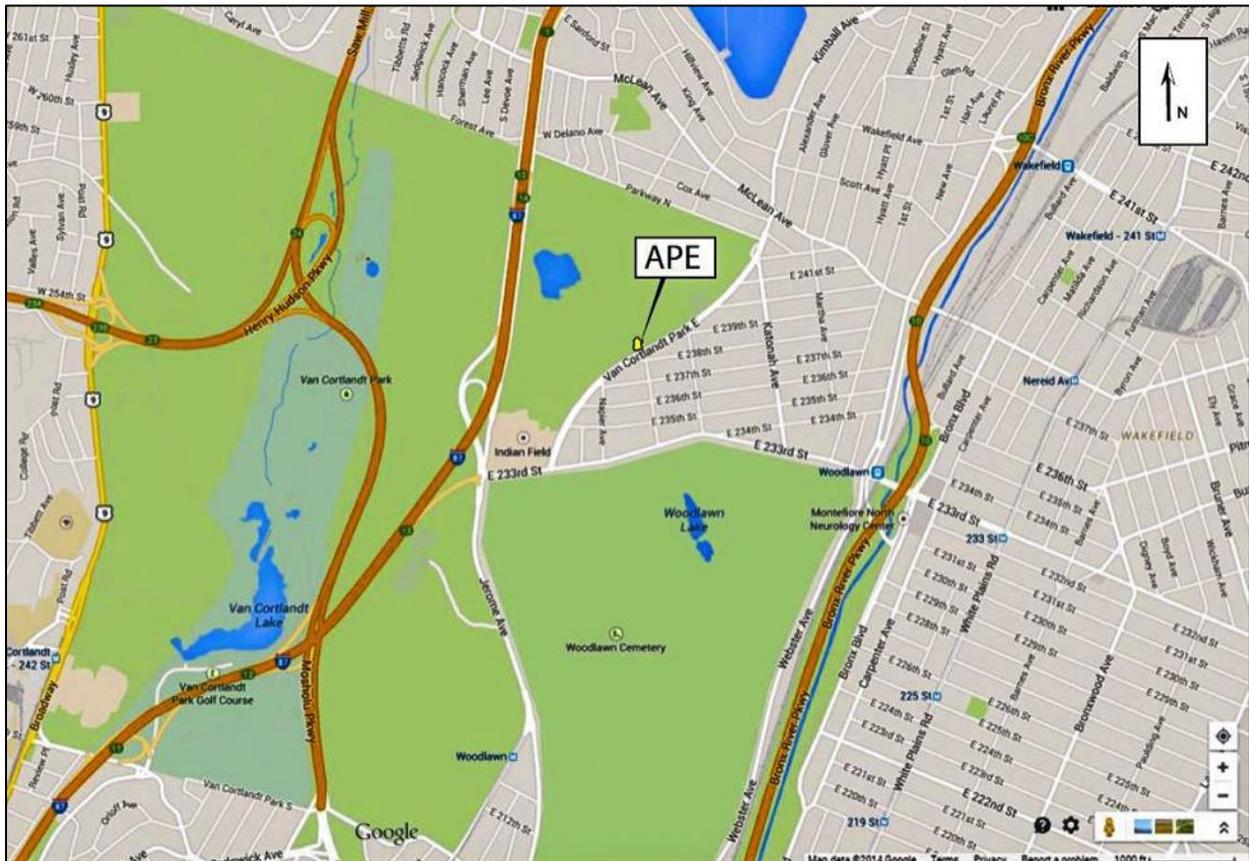


Figure 01: Proposed cut/excavation section (Parks 2014).

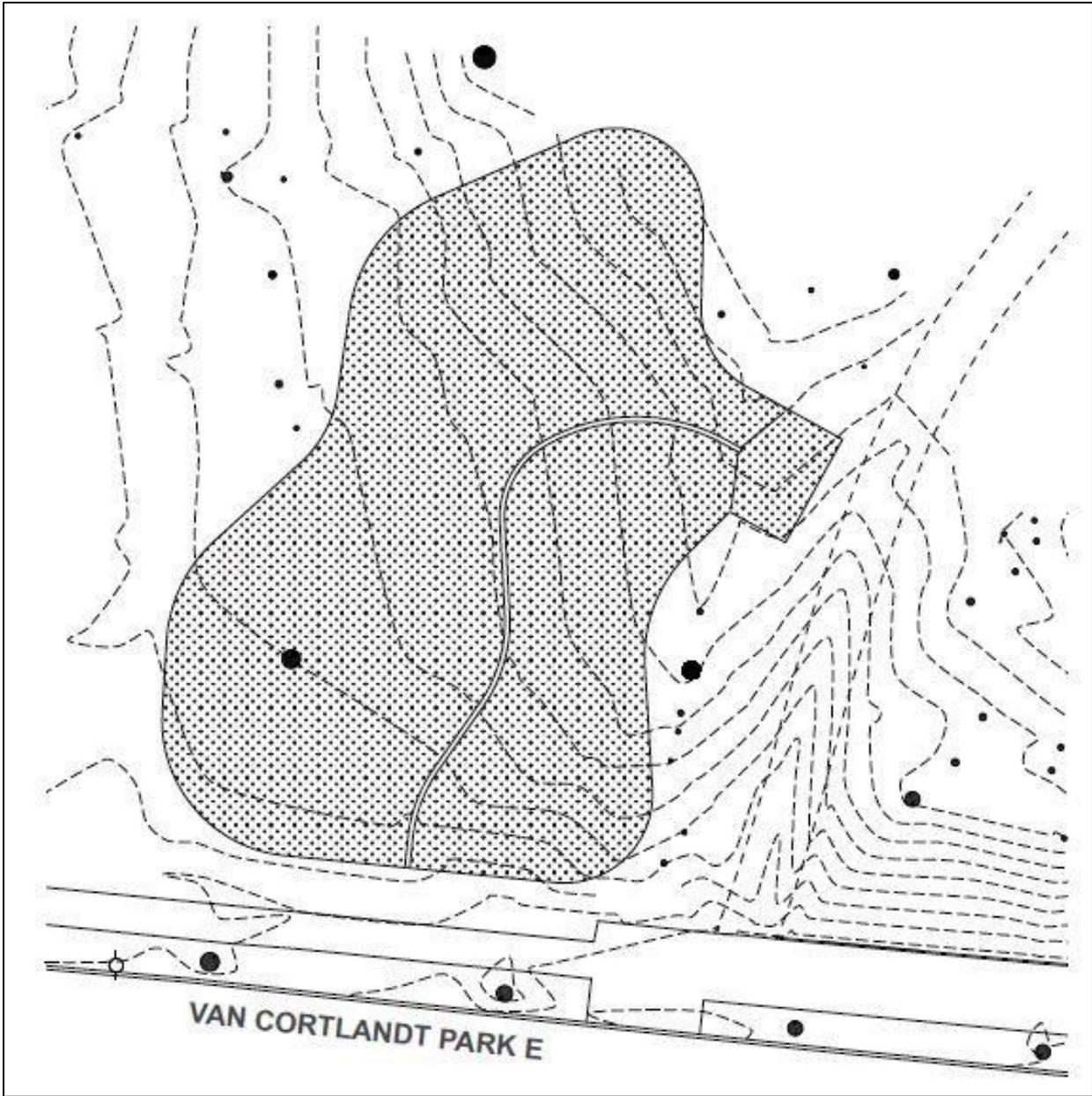
III. AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT

The Project is located in the northeastern portion of the park and is adjacent to the John Muir Trail (Map 05). The surrounding area is known as the Northeast Forest, a low-lying area which is dominated by oak trees. The John Muir Trail (established 1997) is a 1.5 mile informal dirt trail that runs east to west through the forest, connecting three wooded areas of Van Cortlandt Park. The woods are home to the Arthur Ross Nursery, the successor of a much larger nursery that existed here in the early twentieth century and which was responsible for the introduction of some non-native plant species into the area.

The existing dog run is located adjacent to the sidewalk at the edge of a natural area. The proposed Woodlawn Dog Run is located in the same location at the edge of the Park on Van Cortlandt Park East, opposite Oneida Avenue. The Area of Potential Effect (APE) is an irregularly shaped area comprising 5,333 sq. ft. (Map 06). It is situated immediately west of the trailhead for the John Muir Nature Trail and northeast of the Stockbridge Indian Memorial, and includes a forested area (Map 07).



Map 05: Location of APE within Van Cortlandt Park (Google Maps 2014).



Map 06: Map of the proposed Woodlawn Dog Run Area (Parks 2014).



Map 07: Location of APE at the edge of the Park's Northeastern Forest.

IV. EXISTING CONDITIONS

A portion of the APE is currently occupied by a temporary dog run (Images 01 - 04). The existing run is rectangular, encompassing a total of 3,464 sq. ft. It is bordered by a dilapidated range fence. Mature shade trees frame and shade the dog run, and there are several trees within the dog run in decline. The entrance to the run lies at its eastern corner, off of the Muir trail. This is the only means of ingress and egress. A rusting steel guide rail runs between the sidewalk and the dog run. The current surface of the dog run is compacted earth.

The remainder of the proposed dog run area is covered by forested growth. A site visit noted several large fieldstones in the area as well as modern concrete debris.



Image 01: Van Cortlandt Park – Existing Dog Run.



Image 02: Van Cortlandt Park – Existing Dog Run.



Image 03: Van Cortlandt Park – Existing Dog Run.



Image 04: Van Cortlandt Park – Existing Dog Run.

V. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Bronx is a coastal lowland lying within the Hudson Valley Region and is part of the Manhattan Prong of the New England Upland Physiographic Province (Isachsen et al. 2000). The latter is an extension of the Great Appalachian Valley, and includes Manhattan, the Bronx, Westchester County and part of Putnam County (Scharf 1886:6-7). The Bronx is underlain by three different types of bedrock: Fordham gneiss, which is a metamorphic rock found typically in areas with steep terrain; Inwood marble, which is found in lowlying areas; and Yonkers granite or Yonkers gneiss, found in the north Bronx and Westchester County. The east side of Van Cortlandt Park, including the project area, is underlain mainly by Yonkers granite (Storch Associates 1986:52). The elevation of the coastal lowlands within the Manhattan Prong is an average of 20' to 25' above mean sea level (JMA 2007:2).

The geology and topography of the Bronx is the result of the substantial glacial activity that occurred in the region over nearly half a million years. Until at least 20,000 years ago, during the Wisconsinian Glaciation, the project area was covered by the Laurentide Ice Sheet. The glaciers left behind rock and earth that formed moraines running north to south through the Bronx. Glacial meltwater formed numerous rivers and creeks throughout the area, including Tibbets Brook, which runs to the west of the APE. Lakes and ponds were also formed at the end of the glacial period, and swamps and marshes formed in areas with poor drainage. At the end of the last glaciation, the project area was within a coniferous, hardwood forest. The modern terrain of the Bronx is varied and includes hills and level terrain, rock outcroppings and lowlying forests.

The soils within the APE are exclusively Charlton loam, with a slight variance in slope between the eastern edge of the APE and the remainder of that area (Map 08) (USDA 2014). Approximately 72% of soils are Charlton loam with 3% to 8 % slope (ChC), and 28% are Charlton loam with 8% to 15% slope (ChB) (USDA 2014). Charlton soils are deep, loamy soils with excellent drainage, found in glaciated uplands throughout New England and eastern New York (USDA 2013). They are strongly to moderately acidic and typically contain between 5% and 35% rocky inclusions (USDA 2013).



Map 08: USDA soil survey (United States Department of Agriculture 2014).

VI. PROJECT AREA HISTORY

This section provides an overview of the history of the project area, briefly covering both the pre-contact and historic periods as there have been dozens of historical and archaeological accounts of the area history and, specifically, Van Cortlandt Park. Some general information is provided about the area that is now the Bronx for context, but the focus is on the project area and vicinity. For more detailed information on the prehistory of the greater area, see Parker (1920), Bolton (1934) and Smith (1944). For more in-depth history of Van Cortlandt Park, see the various reports discussed in Section VII, as well as the Van Cortlandt Park Restoration Master Plan produced by Storch Associates (1986).

Van Cortlandt Park has been the site of a significant amount of Native American activity, including resource procurement and settlement. During the historic period, the Park consisted of mansion, farmland and associated structures. It was also the site of substantial activity during the American Revolution, including the massacre of a number of Native Americans of the Stockbridge group who were aligned with the colonial forces. The property has been a New York City park since 1888 when the Van Cortlandt family sold the property to New York City.

PRE-CONTACT PERIOD

Although the date of the first human occupation of North America is the subject of much dispute, there is evidence of human presence in the northeastern United States since approximately 15,000 years B.P. (Hamilton and Buchanan 2010; Fagan 2004). The pre-contact, or prehistoric, era covers the period from this first human occupation until indigenous contact with European settlers. Prehistoric occupation is divided into three major cultural periods: Paleo-Indian (circa 13,000 – 10,000 B.P.), Archaic (circa 10,000 - 3,000 B.P.) and Woodland (circa 3,000 B.P.-A.D. 1600), with each period marked by changes in climate and the archaeological record.

The Paleo-Indian Period

North America was originally populated by nomadic hunter-gatherers who crossed the Bering Strait from Siberia to Alaska over a land bridge that was exposed during a period of lowered sea levels. These people moved into North and South America, following the megafauna which they hunted and adapting their subsistence diets to available seasonal resources. Paleo-Indian groups consisted of small bands that remained highly mobile, with two bands occasionally joining together for the purposes of exchanging mates or material culture (Fagan 2005:101). They did not establish permanent settlements but moved seasonally according to resource availability.

Because of the need for mobility, Paleo-Indian tools and other material culture were not overly complicated or large. Lithic assemblages associated with Paleo-Indians in the project area region are of the Eastern Clovis Tradition, which is characterized by lanceolate projectile points with a flute removed on both sides, and other flaked tools (Fagan 2005:87, 101).

Paleo-Indian sites tend to be located in one of several types of areas. Temporary camps at elevated locations were well-drained and provided good vantage sites for identifying and observing the movements of game (Ritchie and Funk 1971:335). Lithic processing sites are often found alongside streams and rivers. Rivers, lakes, salt marshes and other coastal environments were utilized for the abundant fish, shellfish, fowl, plant life and other aquatic resources that could be easily procured there (Fagan 2005:102).

Very few Paleo-Indian sites have been found in the vicinity of the Bronx, so little is known about the people who inhabited the region during this time. It is probable that any Paleo-Indian inhabitants of the Bronx consisted of small bands of mobile hunter-gatherers whose subsistence was focused on hunting large mammals such as bison, caribou and mastodon, and supplemented with smaller game and seasonal local plant life.

The Archaic Period

Radical changes in the environment at the end of the glacial period and the resulting changes in available resources, including the extinction of the megafauna, necessitated major shifts in the adaptive strategies of indigenous peoples in the Americas. As climate warmed, peoples in the northeastern woodlands turned to deer and other forest mammals, fish and a greater reliance on plant foods, including nuts (Fagan 2005:353). The overall pattern of Archaic adaptations in the northeast has been described as one of “increasing efficiency and success in exploiting the

resources of the forest” (Caldwell 1958). Stone tools became more varied to adapt to the increasing variety of utilized resources.

Settlement patterns during the Archaic remained semi-mobile as the available resources shifted throughout the year, but there was a trend towards increasingly longer amounts of time spent in one location. Groups established base camps, and moved periodically throughout a more limited territory as resources became available (McManamon, et al. 2009). Although population remained low, areas with rich and diverse resources were favored locations and were heavily utilized. The main population concentrations were centered in river valleys that had a wealth of diverse animal and plant resources (Fagan 2005:367).

Information about the Archaic period inhabitants of the Bronx comes from a number of sites that have been identified in the broader region. The majority of these are shell middens found along bodies of water, including several in the Bronx (Rothschild and Matthews 1993:5, Skinner 1919, Parker 1920). Evidence suggests that indigenous cultures in this region followed the general Archaic pattern of increased diversity in stone tool kits and the ability to adapt to a wider range of diverse resources. In coastal regions such as the Bronx, this included increased use of marine resources such as the oysters and other shellfish found throughout southeastern New York.

The Woodland Period

Many of the adaptive strategies developed during the Archaic period in the northeastern woodlands continued into the Woodland period. Rivers remained central to indigenous territories, utilized not only for their rich resources but also for transportation and communication between scattered peoples (Fagan 2005:470). Bands remained small, possibly consisting of a few hundred people at most, with this number being a seasonal aggregate rather than a constant population (Fagan 2005:479). Stone tools continued to evolve, and in New York, much of the Woodland period toolkit is characterized by long, narrow points (Fagan 2005:471).

Two major innovations that characterized the Woodland period were the production of clay pottery and the appearance of horticulture/agriculture. Connected to the development of agriculture was the establishment of permanent villages in the Late Woodland period.

The establishment of settled villages in the Bronx is seen in the Mosholu, or Keskeskick, site, located within the present-day Van Cortland Park at the Parade Grounds. Four other village sites have been documented in the Bronx, in the southwest area of the county: Shorakapcock, Nipinichsen, Gowahasuasing and Saperewack (Rothschild and Matthews 1993:9).

The area around the APE would have been a desirable location for settlement during this period. Numerous lakes and streams, plentiful natural grasses and plants and abundant game would have provided a variety of plant and animal food and fresh drinking water. The coastal and riverine environments, including the Bronx River and Tibbets Brook, would have been an excellent source of fish and shellfish as well as waterfowl and aquatic plants from the salt marshes. The rich deciduous forests found throughout the area could have been utilized for plant life such as acorns and mammals, including deer and squirrel.

Tibbets Brook, located less than a mile to the west of the APE, would have made the area ideal

for occupation according to various predictive models. Native American use of the area has been documented in various excavations, and fill in the Park has been found to contain Native American pottery and stone tools and debitage (e.g., Rothschild and Matthews 1993:10-11, Bankoff, Winter and Ricciardi 1992:6).

CONTACT PERIOD

Contact period in the Bronx began in September of 1609 when Henry Hudson anchored his boat near present-day Yonkers (Scharf 1886:9). At the time of European contact as many as fifteen thousand Native Americans inhabited the New York City area (Burrows and Wallace 1999:5). As with much of the area around New York City, the Bronx was inhabited by groups of Algonquian-speaking Lenape. The predominant group, called the Wickquasgeck, part of the Wappinger Confederacy, lived throughout the Hudson River Valley from northern Manhattan to Westchester County (Bolton 1934:128, Grumet 1981:59-60). Pre-contact territory boundaries were not fixed, and several groups of Lenape may have been present in the area, including the Manhattans, the Sint Sinks, the Siwanoy and the Kitchawancs (Scharf 1886:10).

Soon after the arrival of the Europeans a majority of the Native American population was decimated by a combination of war and disease (Burrows and Wallace 1999:8; Ritchie 1958). Both Native American and European cultures were substantially altered by interactions between the groups, and the material remains from this time period often exhibit an adaptive quality, with the incorporation or overlay of European cultural aspects onto Native cultures, or vice versa.

HISTORIC PERIOD

In 1639, the Dutch West India Company made the first land purchase north of the Harlem River from the Weckquaesgeek tribe (Scharf 1886:23). The first settler in the area was Jonas Bronck, who settled in the southern portion of the Bronx along the Harlem River with his wife and several Dutch, German and Danish indentured servants (Bronx Historical Society 2014). Bronck, for whom the Bronx would later be named, established a farmstead at modern 132nd Street and Lincoln Avenue (Hartman and Lewis 2005). The first community was not established until fifteen years later, in 1654, when Thomas Pell and sixteen families formed the settlement of Westchester. When the counties were formed in New York in 1683, the Bronx became part of Westchester County.

During the early Dutch settlement, the Bronx was located between two major trading outposts, one in New Amsterdam and the other in Fort Orange at Albany. Much of the activity in the area was related to the Dutch trade with Native Americans for furs. As the economy grew and the demand for food increased, the Dutch West India Company encouraged food production by granting large estates to anyone able to clear and cultivate the land (Rothschild and Matthews 1993:12). The recipients of these grants were known as Patroons, and were not only landowners and lords of the manor, but had governmental powers as well. Much of the northern Bronx was under the patroonship of Frederick Philipse, a Dutch carpenter who by this time had become the wealthiest man in the New York Colony (Bielinsky 1976:5). In 1693, the manor of Philipsburgh was established, encompassing the present day town of the same name, and extending south into the Bronx (Map 09).

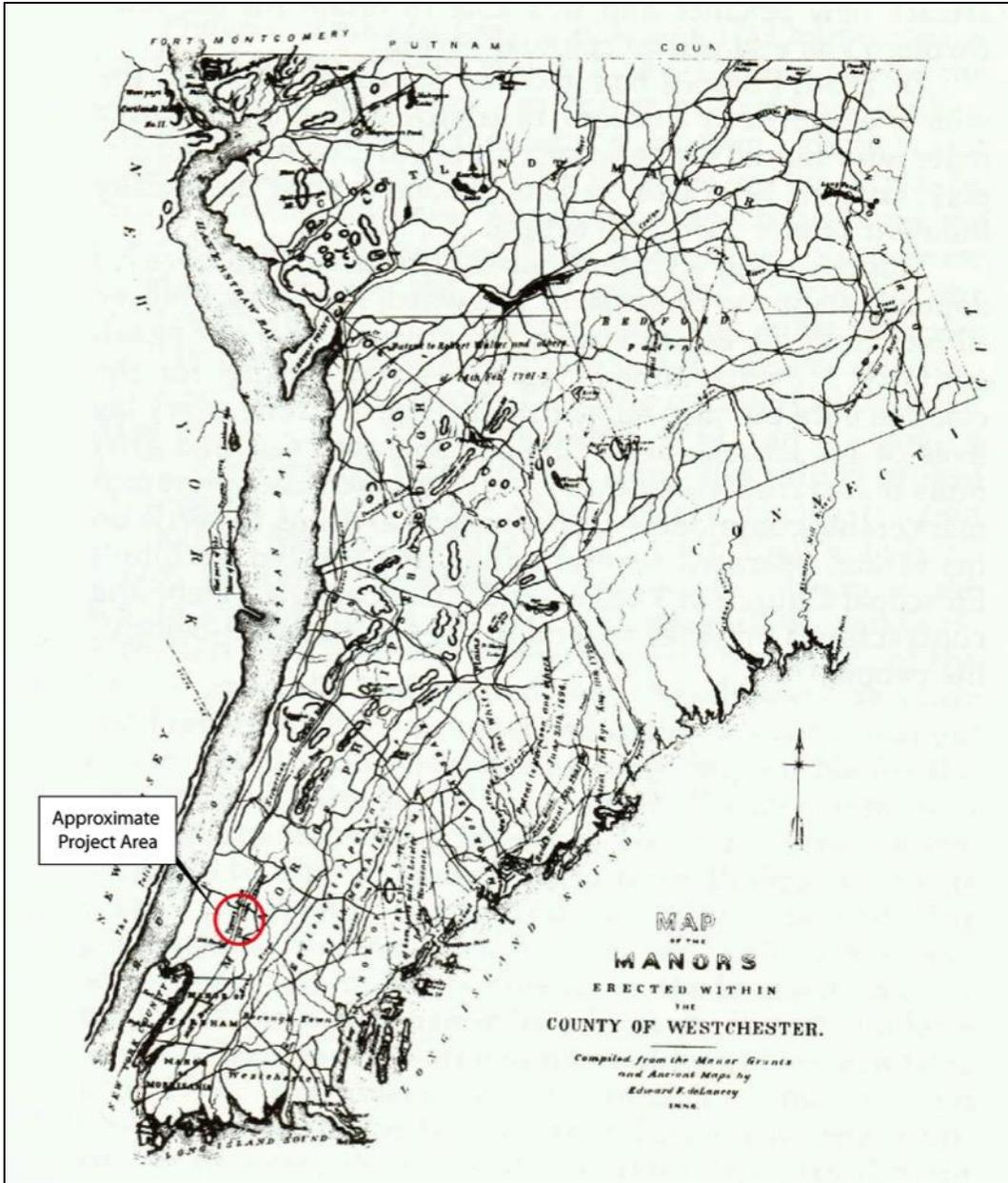
By the end of the seventeenth century, a second town, Eastchester, had been established in the Bronx. The remainder of what would become Bronx County was contained within one of four large estates. In addition to Philipsburgh, these were Pelham, Morrisania and Fordham. The economy and land use were agricultural, with wheat, cattle, horses and sheep being the main products (Hartman and Lewis 2005). Most of the Native Americans had left the area by 1700, and the population was mainly English and Dutch and around ten to fifteen percent enslaved Africans (Hartman and Lewis 2005).

During the Revolutionary War, the Bronx remained in the hands of the British but saw substantial activity as American troops made numerous incursions into the territory. The Van Cortlandt Mansion was used as a headquarters by British General William Howe for a short time during the War. Augustus Van Cortlandt, the New York City Clerk, hid the city records in the family's burial vault on Vault Hill throughout the war. It is also claimed that the Mansion was host to George Washington on several occasions. Washington may have met with Rochambeau, the French leader, at the house. He is also said to have stayed there in 1783 on the night before the British evacuated the city and the Americans began their march to New York City from Van Cortlandt's land.

Throughout the eighteenth and much of the nineteenth century, the Bronx was largely farmland. Inevitably, the growth of New York City and the developing urban infrastructure began to affect the Bronx. In the 1830s, responding to the need for fresh drinking water and a growing city population, the City began construction of the Croton Aquaduct. The system passed through what would become Van Cortlandt Park, and some of its infrastructure is still visible today. The second Croton Aquaduct, constructed in the 1880s, also passed through the future Park, although underground. The growing urban infrastructure also included the construction of a railroad line, the Putnam line of the New York Central Railroad, through the Van Cortlandt property, beginning in 1869 and opening in 1881.

The later 1800s saw numerous immigrants, mainly Italian, settling in the Bronx. They worked on many public infrastructure projects, including the railways and the Croton Aquaduct. In 1878, parts of the Bronx west of the Bronx River were annexed by New York City. The remainder of what is today known as the Bronx was added in 1895.

In the early twentieth century, improved affordable transportation and the arrival of the subway in the Bronx allowed many working class families to move out from crowded areas of Manhattan north to the Bronx, where they could get more space for less money (Bronx Historical Society 2014). This influx brought a significant amount of diversity to the borough, with people of Eastern and Central European Jewish descent comprising the largest ethnic group (Bronx Historical Society 2014).

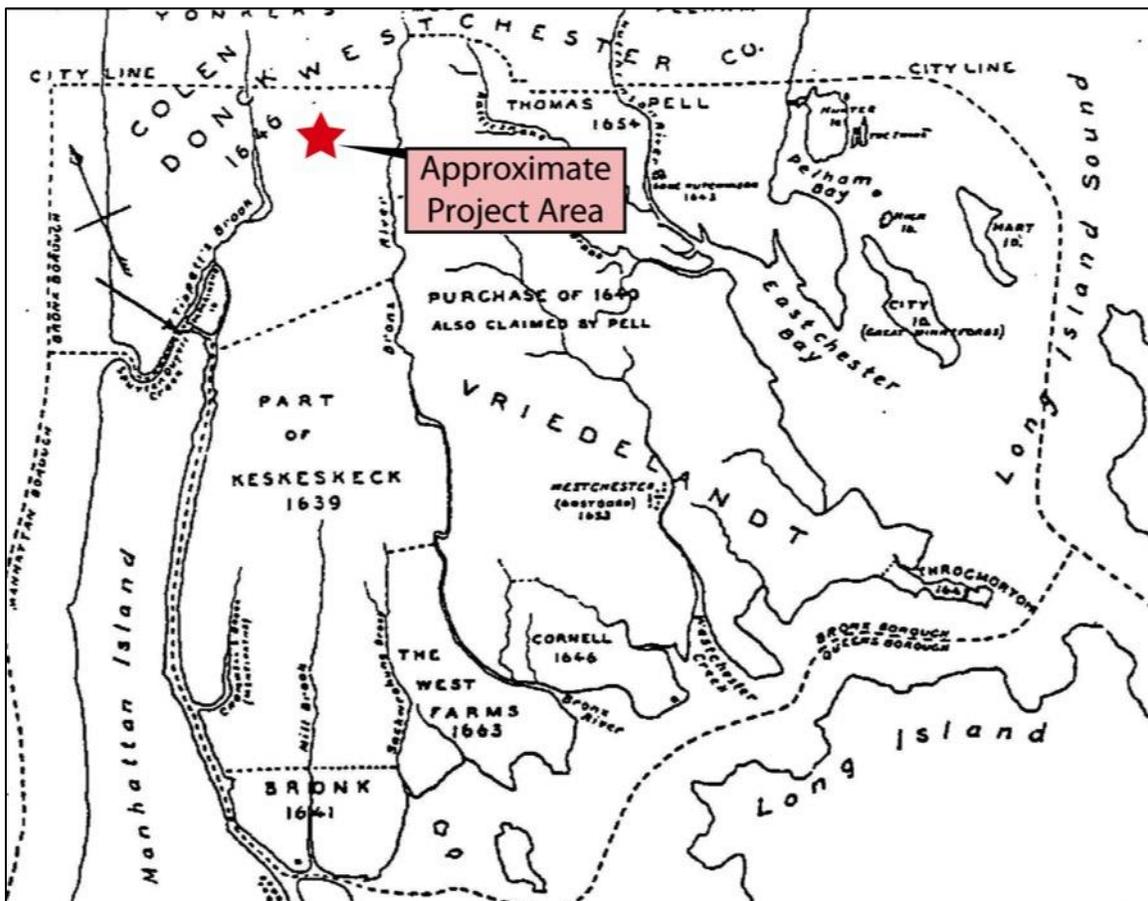


Map 09: Map of the Manors Erected Within The County of Westchester showing the general Project Area within the Manor of Philipsburgh (from Bielinski 1976:12).

SITE HISTORY

The Colonial Era

The APE, and surrounding vicinity, was part of a larger land acquisition made by the Dutch West India Company from the Wiechquaskeck Native American tribe in 1639 (NYCPR 1986:2). The first individual owner of what would become Van Cortlandt Park was Adriaen Van Der Donck (1620-1655), a lawyer who had immigrated from Holland in 1641 (Map 10). Upon his arrival in the New World, he was appointed the Schout-Fiscal of the Patroonship of Rensselaerswyck near Albany. Several years later, in 1646, he purchased the large parcel of land that included the present day Van Cortlandt Park from the Company. To secure this purchase, he also transacted with the Wiechquaskeck for ownership of the land. His purchase was confirmed by a grant from Governor Kieft (Scharf 1886:66). The property was bounded by the Hudson River and the Bronx River to the west and east, and Sputyn Duyvil Creek and the Saw Mill River to the south and north, respectively. Van Der Donck's estate was called de Jonkeerslandt, (from Johngheer, meaning 'the young gentleman'), which is where the regional name Yonkers originates. Van Der Donck farmed the land, producing corn as his main crop.



Map 10: Project Area Location within the land of Adriaen Van Der Donck
(Map from Jenkins 1912:44a).

After Van Der Donck died, his widow Mary remarried. She then filed a successful claim to the property under the name of her new husband, Hugh O'Neal. This claim was affirmed in 1666. Shortly thereafter, the O'Neals transferred the property to Mary's brother, Elias Doughty. He divided the land into smaller parcels and sold it to several different owners. The APE may have been within a large parcel sold to John Hadden in 1672 (Map 09) (Bronx County Register Liber 6 Page 324). In 1668, Doughty also sold a large parcel to William Betts and George Tippet, Betts' son-in-law for whom Tibbetts Brook would be named.

George Tippet and his wife Dorcas sold two parcels of land to Jacobus Van Cortlandt (1658-1739), the first member of the Van Cortlandt family to own the future parkland. His first purchase from Tippet was in 1718 and the second in 1732 (Bronx County Register Liber 4 Page 220, Liber 6 Page 34). It could not be determined if either of these encompassed the APE. While it is clear that some of the future park property came into the Van Cortlandt family from George Tippet, some may also have been purchased from John Hadden. It is not certain whether either of these chains of title applies to the APE. A map drawn over two hundred years after Doughty's sale of the land shows a tract transferred from Doughty to John Hadden that seemingly covers the APE (Map 11). The source of the information for the map was not indicated and given that it was drawn significantly after any primary informants would have died, it cannot be taken as dispositive of ownership.

Van Cortlandt also purchased some of the property that would become Van Cortlandt Park from his father-in-law, Frederick Philipse. Philipse, a wealthy merchant, purchased a large tract of land in the Bronx in 1670. Philipse already owned a considerable amount of land just north of the Park. He came to the New World as Vrederic Felypsen, a carpenter for the Dutch West India Company. By 1674, he had amassed a tremendous fortune through fur trading, shipping and trade in enslaved humans. He was the wealthiest man in the New York Colony (Bielinski 1976:5). After the English takeover of New York, Felypsen anglicized his name and entered government life. He became a New York City alderman and served on the Governor's advisory council (Bielinski 1976:5).

Jacobus Van Cortlandt, who married Frederick Philipse's daughter, was encouraged to invest in land in the Bronx because of his relationship to Philipse. The Bronx County Grantee Index shows that Van Cortlandt received a grant from Frederick "Flipse" on November 6, 1699 (Bronx County Register Liber 3 Page 29). This included some, but not all, of the present-day Van Cortlandt Park. Jacobus purchased the rest of the property that would eventually contain the park bearing his surname over the course of almost four decades, making the final purchase in 1732.

Jacobus was one of seven children of Olaf Van Cortlandt, the founding member of the family in New Amsterdam. Among his siblings was Stephanus Van Cortlandt, the first native-born mayor of New York City. Like his elder brother, Jacobus went on to serve as mayor between 1710 and 1711, and again in 1719 to 1720. Jacobus was married to Eva deVries Philipse, the adopted daughter of Frederick Philipse. It was this connection that led him to acquire the land in the Bronx.



Map 11: *Historical Sketch Map of Kingsbridge, 1645-1783* (Edsall 1887: frontispiece).

Jacobus, like other members of the Van Cortlandt family, was a wealthy merchant. His Bill of Lading book containing receipts from shipments from New York Harbor in the the late seventeenth century shows a flourishing trade in a variety of goods. These included indigo, cow hides, garden seed, cocoa, butter, flour and other food stuffs such as apples, bacon, brisket, “pease” and smoked beef. The book also contains receipts for “Spanish money,” sometimes described as pieces of eight or Mexico and pillar. The receipts show that Jacobus’s business was derived from the Triangular Trade routes that were flourishing in the late seventeenth century. The book contains receipts for shipping to several destinations in the West Indies, including Montserrat, Curacao, Jamaica and Antigua, and to London. In fact, there is evidence that, like his father-in-law, Jacobus participated in the most notorious part of the Triangular Trade, the trade in enslaved persons, receiving small shipments of West Indian slaves and selling them to local farmers and other residents (Foote 2004:63). Van Cortlandt’s letterbook contains correspondance from Jacobus to various business associates regarding the particulars of this trade, including complaints about the quality of the slaves being sent to New York (Foote 2004:63).

Jacobus also farmed the property in the Bronx and ran a saw mill and grist mill. He dammed the Brook around 1699 to provide power for the saw mill, creating the body of water that is today known as Van Cortlandt Park Lake. When he died in 1739, he left the property to his second son, Frederick. Six slaves, and possibly one enslaved Native American, were included in this bequest (Bankoff and Winter 2005:294). In 1748, Frederick built Van Cortlandt mansion. He died a year later, leaving the property to his son James (1727-1787). Frederick's own will included eleven or twelve slaves (Bankoff and Winter 2005:296). In this document, he refers to the Bronx property as a "plantation," and mentions the stone house that is "about" finished (Bankoff and Winter 2005:291).

The Revolutionary War

The Bronx, including the area where Van Cortlandt Park stands today, was the sight of substantial activity during the Revolutionary War. In advance of the British occupation of New York City, Augustus Van Cortlandt, the City Clerk and the brother of James, was directed by the Provincial Congress to find a hiding place for the city records. He hid them in the family vault at Vault Hill, near the mansion and southwest of the APE, where they remained throughout the war.

Although the Bronx was under the control of the British, American troops made incursions into the territory, and the area where the APE is located was known as a sort of 'no-man's land.' After the British occupation of New York City, the woods and farmland around the APE were an uncategorized, shifting territory between the British to the south and the American lines to the north. The area saw a large amount of activity in the form of "skirmishes, raids, massacres, and episodes of banditry and espionage" (Zaboly 1977:65).

The Stockbridge Indian Massacre

During the American Revolution, many Native Americans fought for the British. The Stockbridge Indians¹, however, worked with the Continental Army. They were officially admitted into the Army on July 30, 1776, after several petitions to Congress by or on behalf of General Washington (Zaboly 1977:70). One of their key roles was as scouts within the area of the Bronx where the APE is located, south of the American lines in present-day Westchester County. On August 31, 1778, British forces ambushed a scouting party, killing 37 of the Stockbridge, including their sachem, Chief Ninham, and his son. The massacre occurred around and perhaps within the APE.

Much of the information about the massacre comes from the journal of the great grandson of one of the British commanding officers, Daniel Simcoe, to whom the story was related by his grandmother, the daughter of Lt. Colonel John Graves Simcoe, the British commanding officer. She had been 18 years old at the time of the massacre and walked through the fields where the Stockbridge had fallen before they were buried (Zaboly 1977:83).

¹ Named for their home territory near Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

On August 20, 1778, a large British scouting party under the command of Lt. Colonel Andreas Emmerich was moving northeast on the Mile Square Road (present-day Van Cortlandt Park East). As they stopped to move a fence in “Devoe’s farm yard”² they were ambushed by a group of American troops and Native Americans hiding in the hills and ravines on either side of the road (Simcoe 1884:81; Zaboly 1977:68). Sixteen British troops were killed or captured (Zaboly 1977:66). British spies reported that the Native Americans who took part in the ambush were Chief Ninham³ and some of his tribe (Simcoe 1884:83).

The Stockbridge participation in the August 20th ambush was not their first success against the British. They had become an embarrassment to the British forces, and after their latest attack, were targeted by Emmerich and Lt. Colonel John Graves Simcoe (Zaboly 1977:72). On August 31, 1778, Simcoe and more than 500 foot and horse troops set out to entrap the Stockbridge (Zaboly 1977:72).

The British troops succeeded in ambushing a group of Stockbridge scouts. The Stockbridge party consisted of about 50 to 60 individuals, including Chief Ninham and his son, in addition to 60 American troops (Zaboly 1977:74). The fighting did not go well for the Continental forces. Chief Ninham is alleged to have sacrificed himself to allow his tribe members to escape (Simcoe 1854:86). The Stockbridge are reported to have climbed over a stone wall on the side of the road and fled west across open fields (Zaboly 1977:76). Ninham and his son were killed at the site of the initial ambush, while most of the other Stockbridge were killed during the British pursuit across the fields, heading towards the Van Cortlandt woods (Zaboly 1977:80). In total, 37 Stockbridge were killed.

After the battle, the bodies of the dead were left where they fell and were not buried for at least two days. Members of the Devoe family gathered the dead and interred them in common pits covered by large stones (Zaboly 1977:84).

In 1906, the Daughters of the American Revolution dedicated a monument to the massacred Stockbridge (Image 05). The monument is alleged to have been erected over the largest of the common burial pits. It is possible that they simply replaced anything that was left of the original stone cairn built by the Devoes, but no veritable source was found for this information.

The Stockbridge were relocated in the mid-1800s to a reservation in Wisconsin. Today the tribe has about 1500 members. In 1978, a staged reenactment of the battle and commemoration were held by the Stockbridge Historical Committee and the Bronx Historical Society (Bronx Historical Society 1978).

The colonial era thoroughfare referred to in the accounts of the massacre, known as Mile Square Road, is the present day Van Cortlandt Park East. The Parks Department website for the John Muir Nature Trail states that the remains of two stone fences standing near the entrance to the Muir trail are remnants from this road (NYCPR 2014).

² This probably refers to Daniel Devoe, who rented the land from the Van Cortlandts and had a farm within the modern day Park boundaries, on the northeast side of Van Cortlandt Park East, near the APE.

³ The correct spelling of the Chief’s name was “Ninham”.



Image 05: Monument to the Stockbridge Indians erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution south of the APE.

The Nineteenth Century

After the Revolutionary War and into the nineteenth century, the Van Cortlandt property continued to be used as farmland, while some the area was maintained as natural forest. The APE remained undeveloped, sitting at the intersection of Mount Vernon Road (Van Cortlandt Park East, formerly Mile Square Road) and the lane branching off to the northwest. The property passed through two more Van Cortlandt owners before being sold to the City. James Van Cortlandt died in 1781 and left the estate to his brother Augustus, the Clerk who had hidden the City records in the family vault. Augustus passed away in 1823 and left the property to his grandson, Augustus White. The latter Augustus changed his surname to Van Cortlandt per his grandfather's wishes, in order to continue the family line (Rothschild and Matthews 1993:15). In 1868, some of the Van Cortlandt property was divided into smaller parcels (HPI 1998:10). Samuel Valentine purchased a parcel along Van Cortlandt Park East. The APE is just outside of this parcel to the northeast.

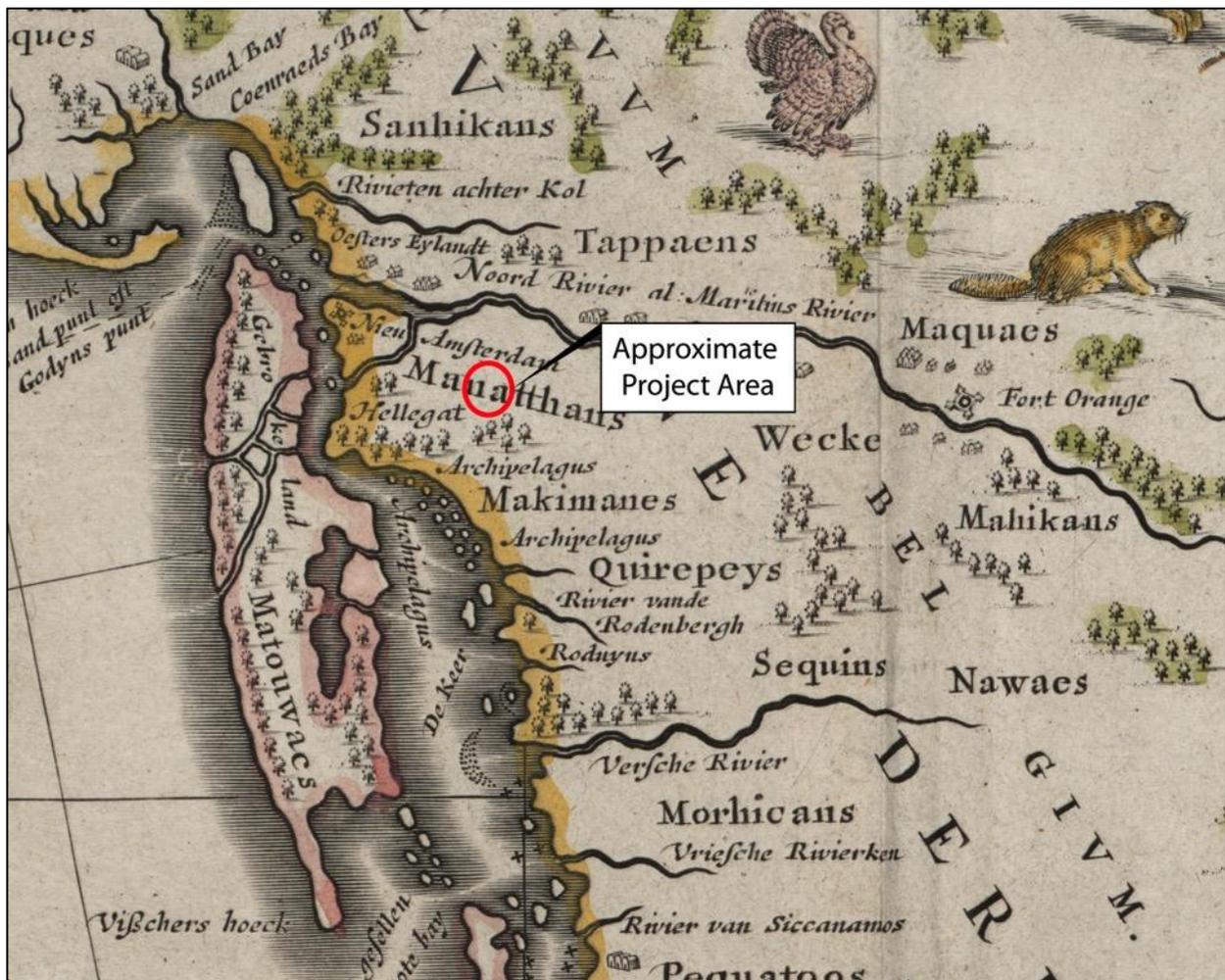
As the City expanded and the need for infrastructure grew, the area near the APE became the site of two major developments. The Croton Aqueduct, originally built in the late 1830s and a new, underground aqueduct built in the 1880s crossed the area. Both of these are located to the west of the APE. The Putnam Railroad also opened a line through the present day Park in the 1880s. While not directly impacting the project area, these major infrastructural changes would have affected the character of the surrounding area. This can be seen in maps from the mid and late nineteenth century showing the establishment of a street grid directly opposite the APE.

In the late 1880s, the Van Cortlandt family sold the land, including their Mansion, to the City for the purpose of opening a public park. The Park was opened in 1889, part of a growing environmental preservation movement that saw the establishment of large areas of public open space (Ricciardi 1997). The details of the opening of the park are discussed extensively in the Storch Associates report (1986).

VII. MAP STUDY

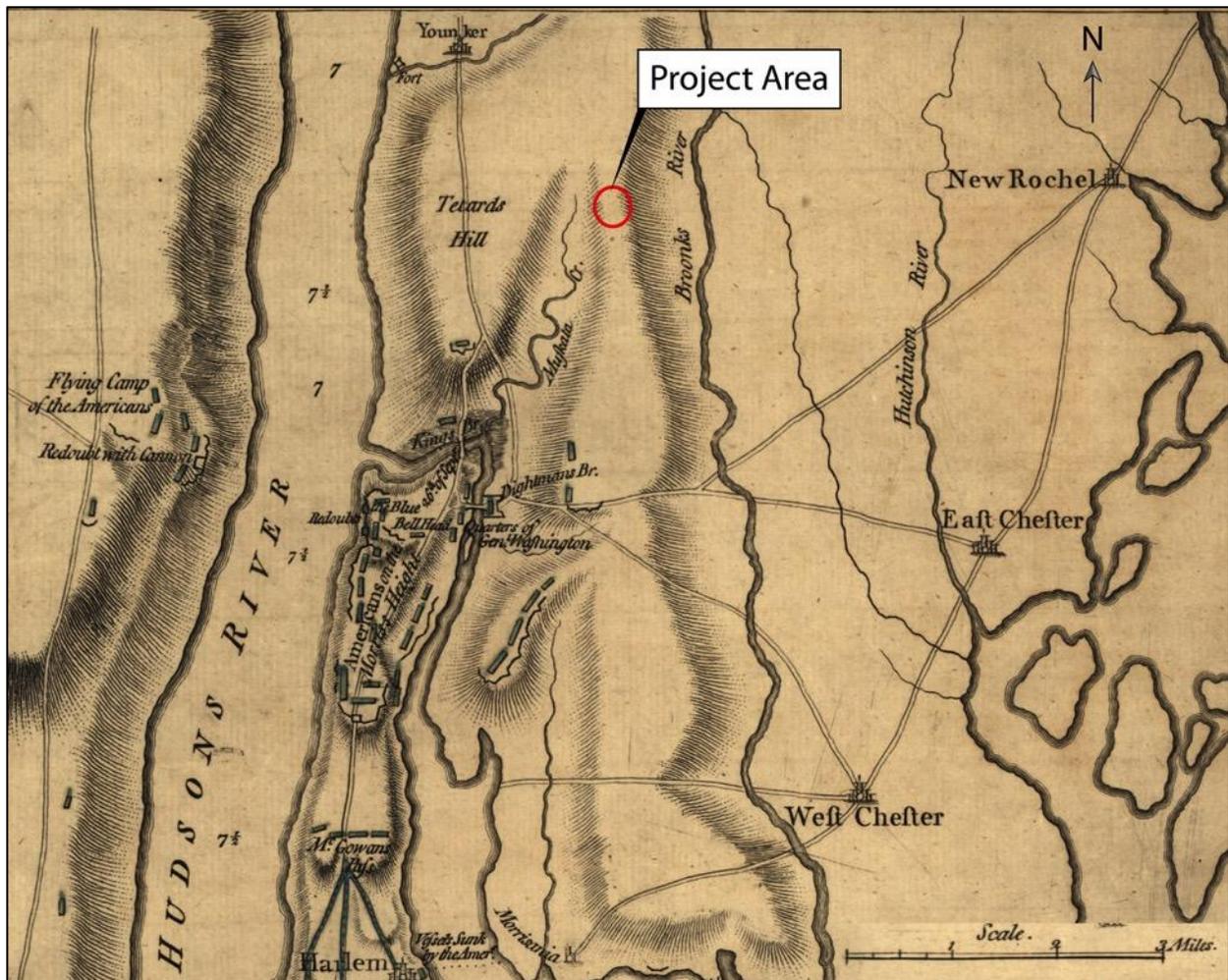
Several maps were assessed to outline the history and development of the Project Area and APE. This section presents some of the maps considered with a brief discussion of each. This section also contains a discussion of several maps relative to the Stockbridge Massacre and Parks maps of the topography and improvements to the area once it became Van Cortlandt Park.

The land masses on the 1635 *Nova Belgica et Anglia Nova* map by Willem Janszoon Blaeu are not quite as we know them today (Map 12). Manhattan, or “Nieu Amsterdam” is depicted as a triangular mass, much shorter than actual (relative) size. The APE is identifiable in relation to what would become known as the Hudson and Harlem Rivers and Spuyten Duyvil Creek. The map is relevant to the present study for the Native American names it contains. The “Manatthans” are shown throughout the Bronx and within the Project Area. North of this is the Wecke, possibly a variation of the Wiequaesgeek tribe, from whom the Dutch West India Company bought land in the Bronx.



Map 12: *Nova Belgica et Anglia Nova*. Willem Janszoon Blaeu, 1635.

William Faden's 1776 *A Plan of New York Island, with part of Long Island, Staten Island and East New Jersey* was intended to depict fortifications and other military structures during the Revolutionary War (Map 13). The topography of the APE can be seen clearly as a level area between two slopes, and near the Mosholu Creek and the Bronx River. The steep slope to the east of the project area may be the slope referred to in accounts of the Stockbridge Indian Massacre. To the west of the APE is Tetards Hill, and at its south end, Fort Independence. The fort was originally built by the Continental Army in 1776 and burned by them when they left New York City. The British partially rebuilt the fort and occupied it for another two years, when it was again destroyed in an American assault. The APE lies between the numerous fortifications at the north end of Manhattan and American positions to the north, not depicted on this map.



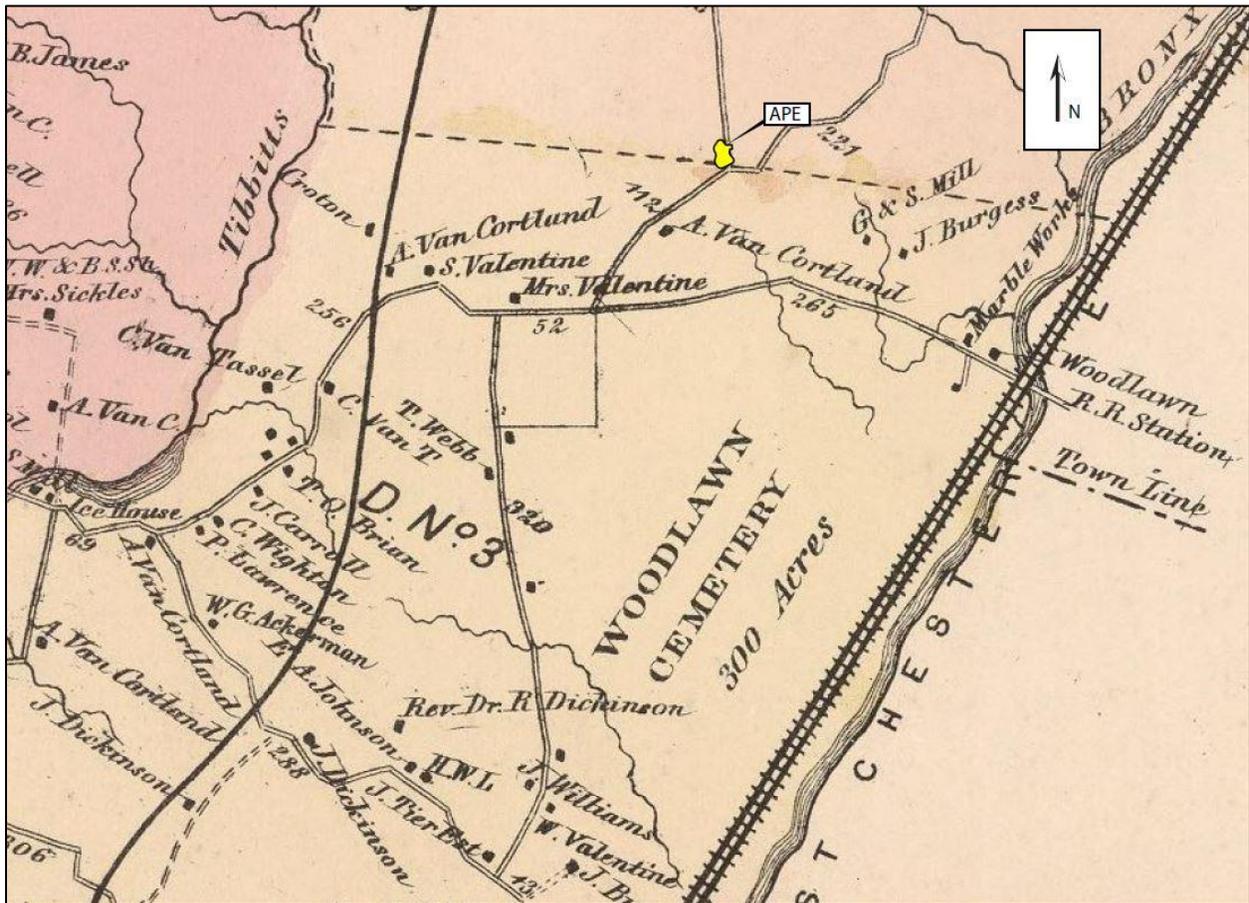
Map 13: *A Plan of New York Island, with part of Long Island, Staten Island and East New Jersey*. William Faden, 1776.

The 1828 Eddy map shows “Col. Van Cortlandt” as the owner of the property on which the APE is located (Map 14). This could refer to James Van Cortlandt, the owner of the property during the Revolutionary War. James, however, died in 1781 and the owner of the property at the time the map was made was Augustus (White) Van Cortlandt, who is not known to have served in the military. There are buildings depicted on the Van Cortlandt property to the southwest of the APE, likely the family’s mansion. No buildings are present near the project area, but given the scope of the complete map (thirty miles around New York), it is unlikely that it was intended to show all extant structures.



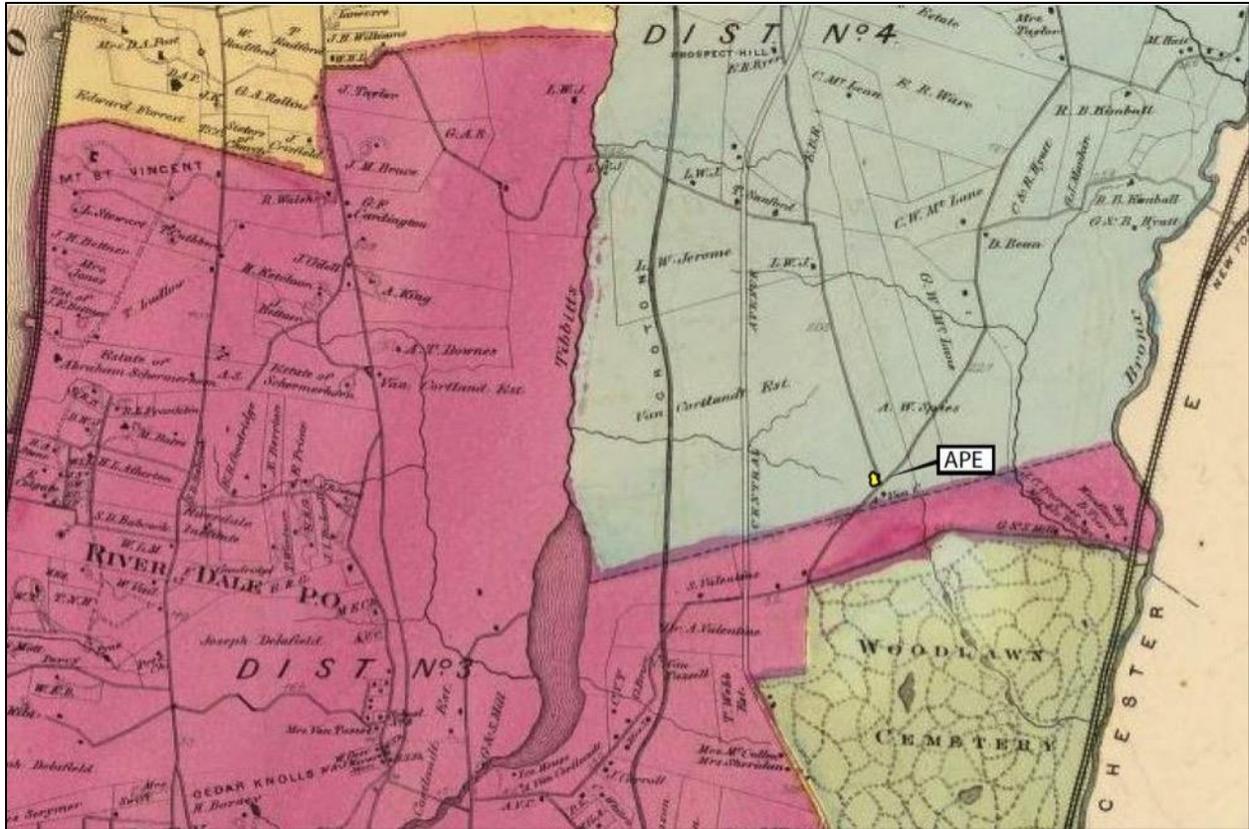
Map 14: *Map of the Country Thirty Miles Round the City of New York.* John H. Eddy, 1828.

The 1867 Beers Atlas is the earliest map to depict names associated with properties around the APE in detail (Map 15). A. Van Cortlandt (Augustus) is shown just to the southwest of the project site, and his name appears in several other locations on the map. The name Valentine is also associated with the area that is now Indian Field within Van Cortlandt Park. Other records indicate that the Van Cortlandts owned the entire area that would become the Park, so it is likely that the Valentines were tenants. The black marks on the map indicate buildings. There are no structures directly associated with the immediate vicinity APE. The Beers Atlas is also the earliest maps to show the APE's location at the intersection of two roads. Although the names of the roads are not on this map, the road to the south of the APE is Mount Vernon Avenue, formerly Mile Square Road, which is today known as Van Cortlandt Park East.

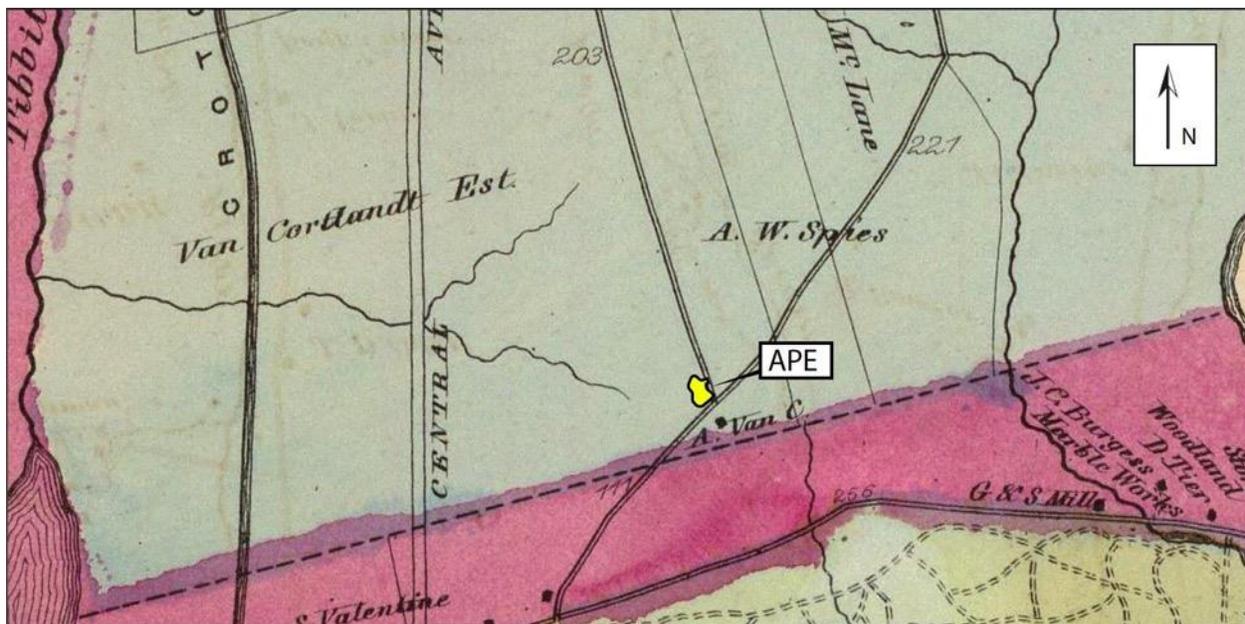


Map 15: Town of Yonkers, Westchester County, New York. Frederick W. Beers, 1867.

The 1868 Beers map shows the larger Van Cortlandt property, with the APE clearly within its boundaries (Maps 16 and 17). There appears to be a new structure directly opposite the project area, attributed to A. Van Cortlandt, but the APE remains undeveloped. The S. Valentine of the previous map is still depicted in the same location, but Mrs. Valentine is absent. A new north/south road, Central Avenue, is present to the west of the APE.



Map 16: Town of Yonkers, Westchester County, New York. Frederick W. Beers, 1868.



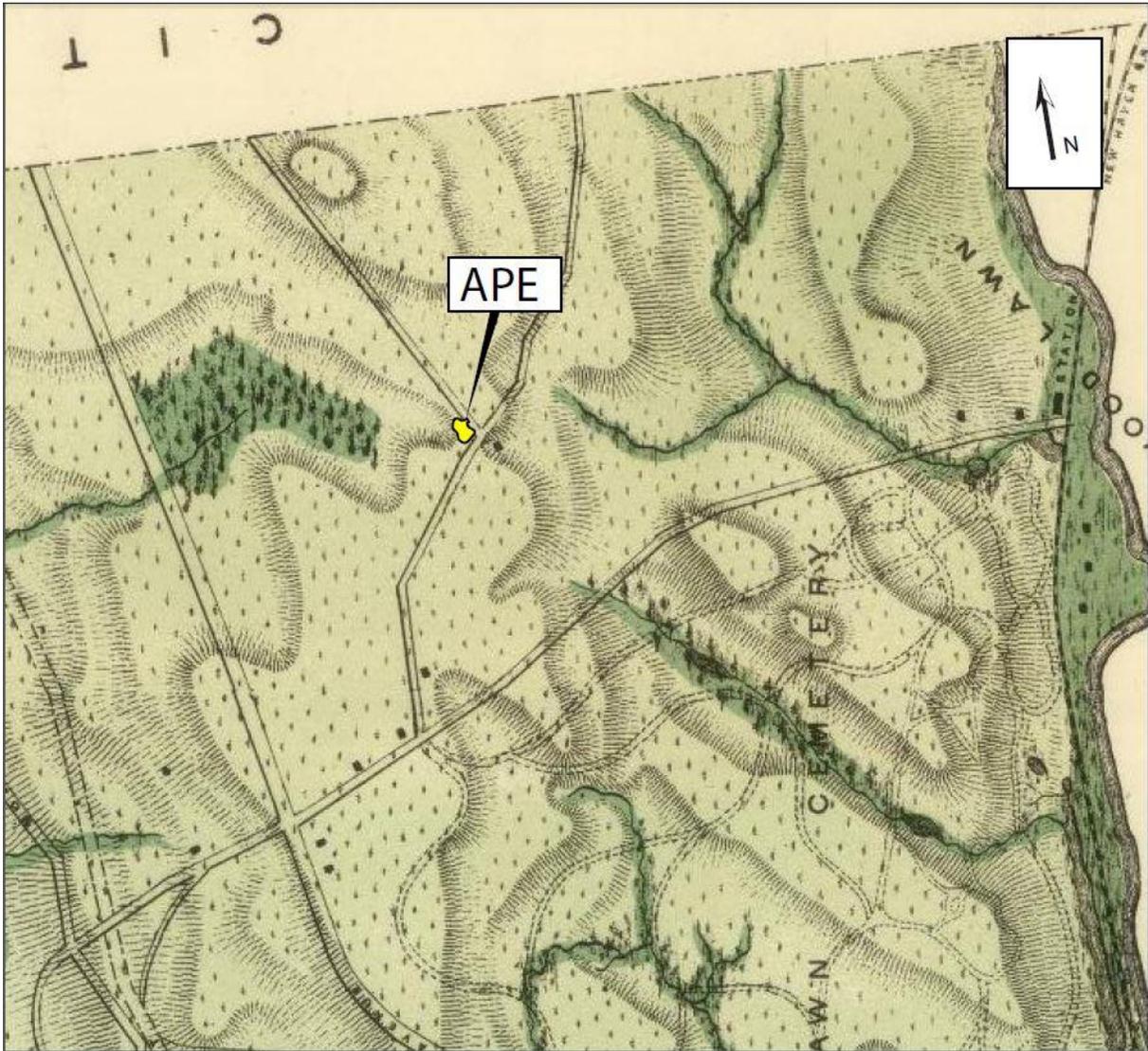
Map 17: Detail of Town of Yonkers, Westchester County, New York. Frederick W. Beers, 1868.

This 1874 topographical map shows how the APE remained just outside of development in the area (Map 18). The street grid to the south and east of the APE is the same that exists today. As these areas developed, much of the Van Cortlandt property, including where the project area is located, remained unaffected. Structures do exist on the Van Cortlandt property to the southwest, where the Valentines were listed on the previous Beers maps. The APE topography is a gentle slope, with forests to the west.



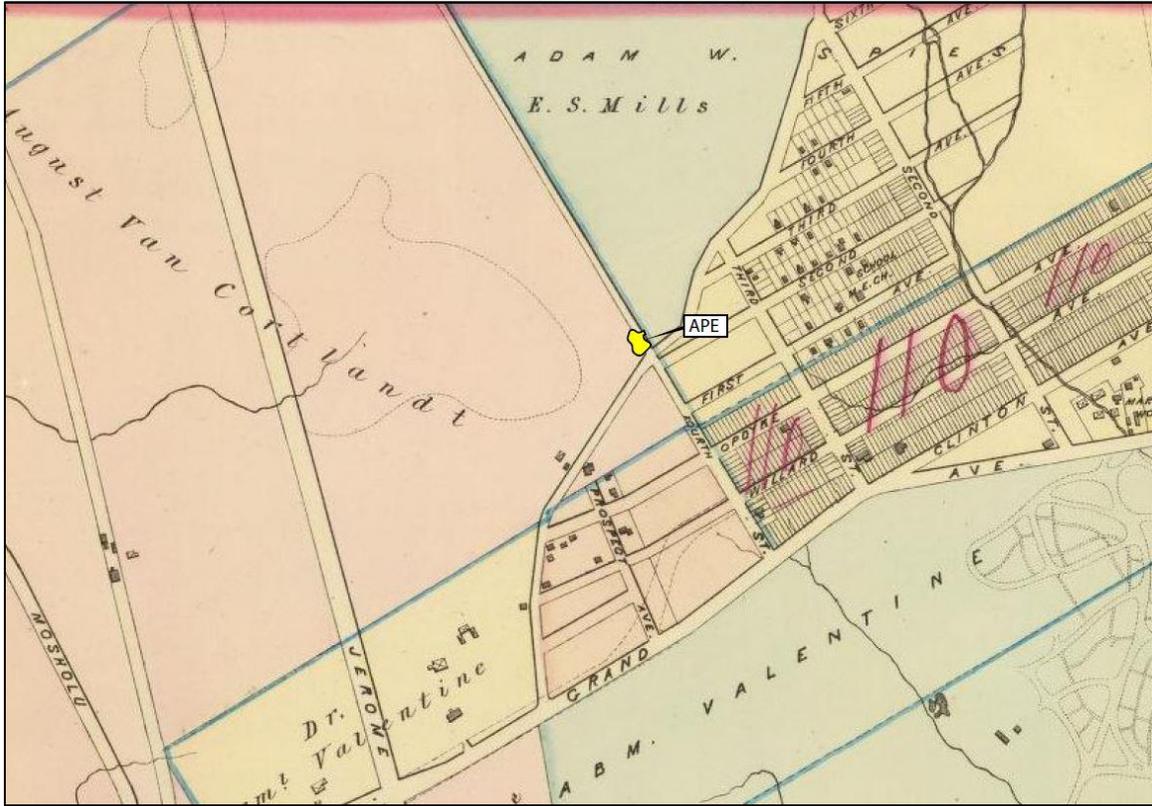
Map 18: *Topographical map made from surveys by the commissioners of the Department of Public Parks of the city of New York of that part of Westchester County adjacent to the City and County of New York.* New York Department of Public Parks, 1874.

Viele's Topographical map (1874) depicts the same gently sloping terrain and nearby forest (Map 19). The structure attributed to A. Van Cortlandt on the 1868 Beers map, across the road from the project area, is still present. Structures are also indicated to the southwest, within the area now known as Indian Field.

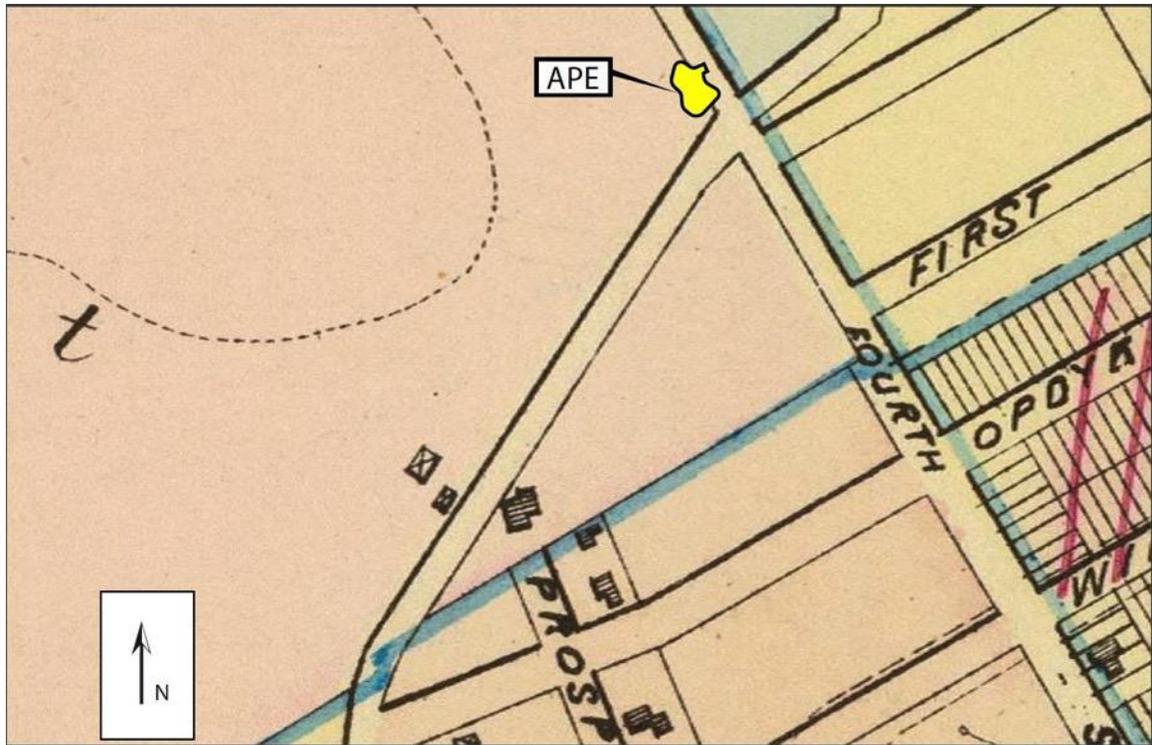


Map 19: *Topographical Atlas of the City of New York*. Egbert Viele, 1874.

The 1879 Bromley Atlas provides more detail than previous maps regarding structures near the APE (Map 20). Slightly southwest of the project area, within the present day Park boundaries, are two shed or stable structures (depicted as rectangles with an X) (Map 21). The type of building across the road from these structures, still within the Van Cortlandt property, could not be determined based on the map key. The larger map, above, shows Dr. Samuel Valentine (the S. Valentine from previous maps) as the owner of the area to the southwest of the APE, with several buildings on his property. The map also shows the ongoing development of the surrounding area, with some of the land within the gridded area already being divided into lots.

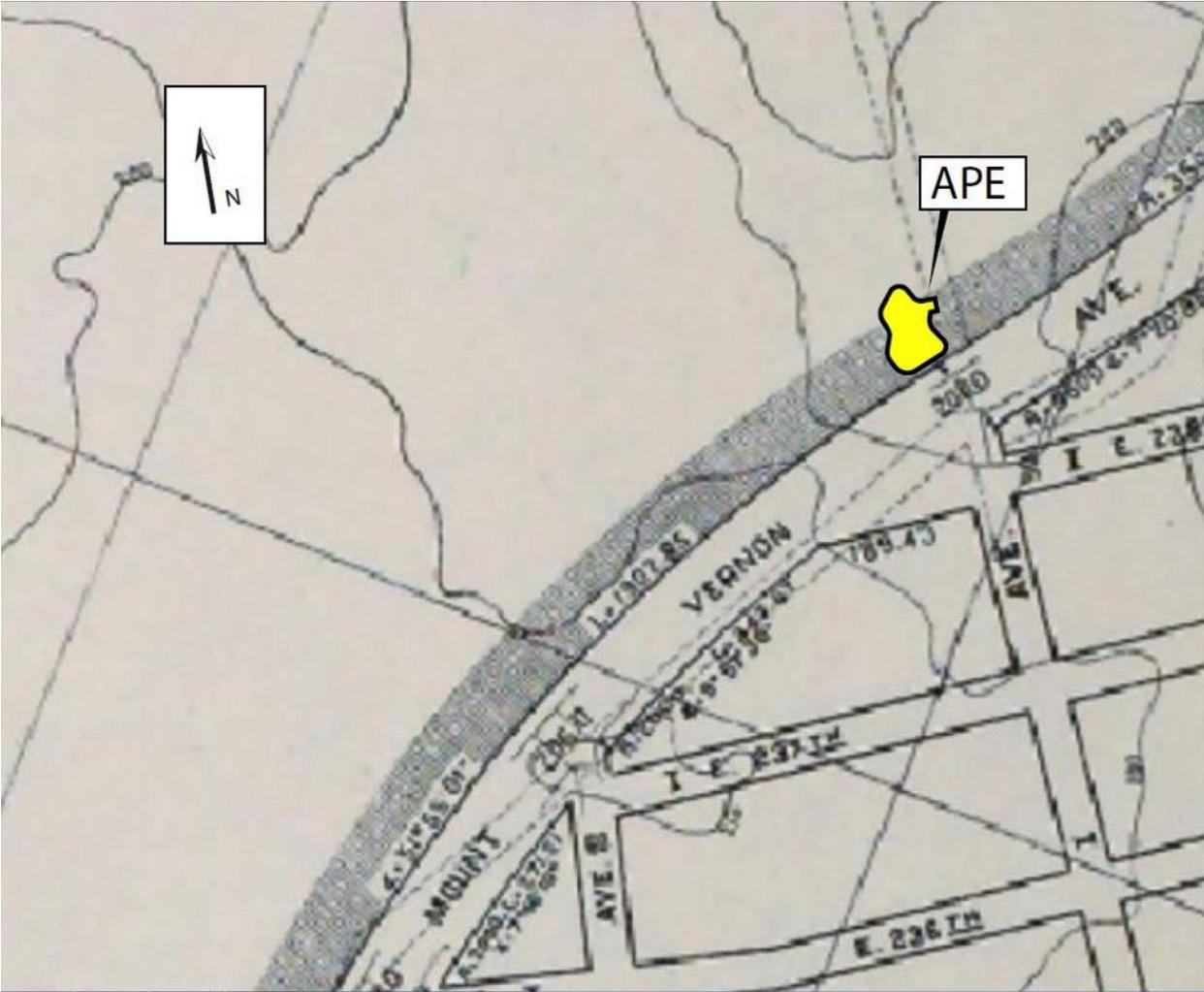


Map 20: Atlas Map of Bronx (New York, New York). G.W. Bromley & Co., 1879.



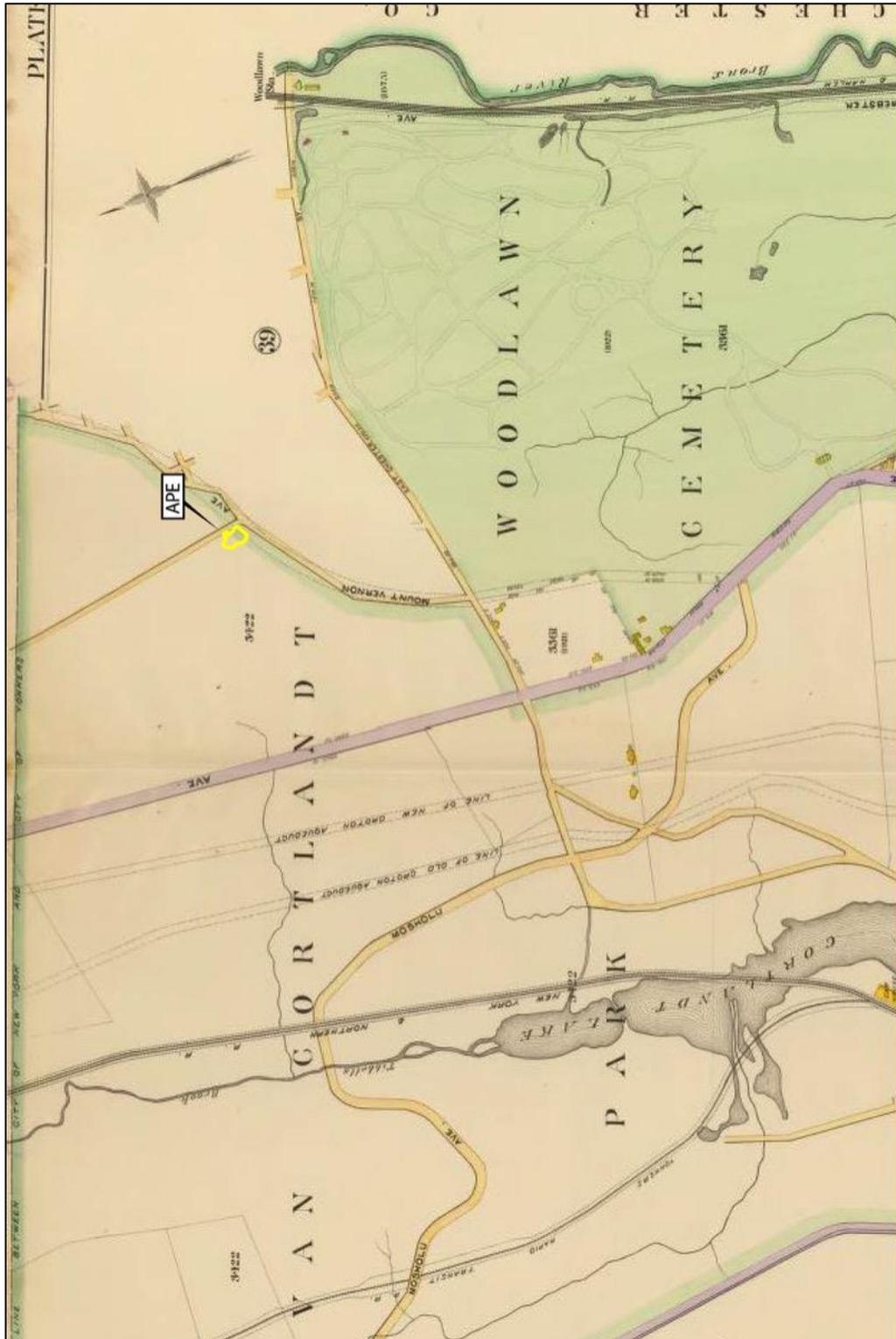
Map 21: Detail of Atlas Map of Bronx (New York, New York) (G.W. Bromley & Co., 1879).

The New York Topographical Bureau's 1892 topographical map shows that the gently sloping topography of area around the APE was not altered after the City's acquisition of the Van Cortlandt property (Map 22). It also shows that the road to the east of the APE appears to have been demapped, as it drawn with dotted rather than solid lines.



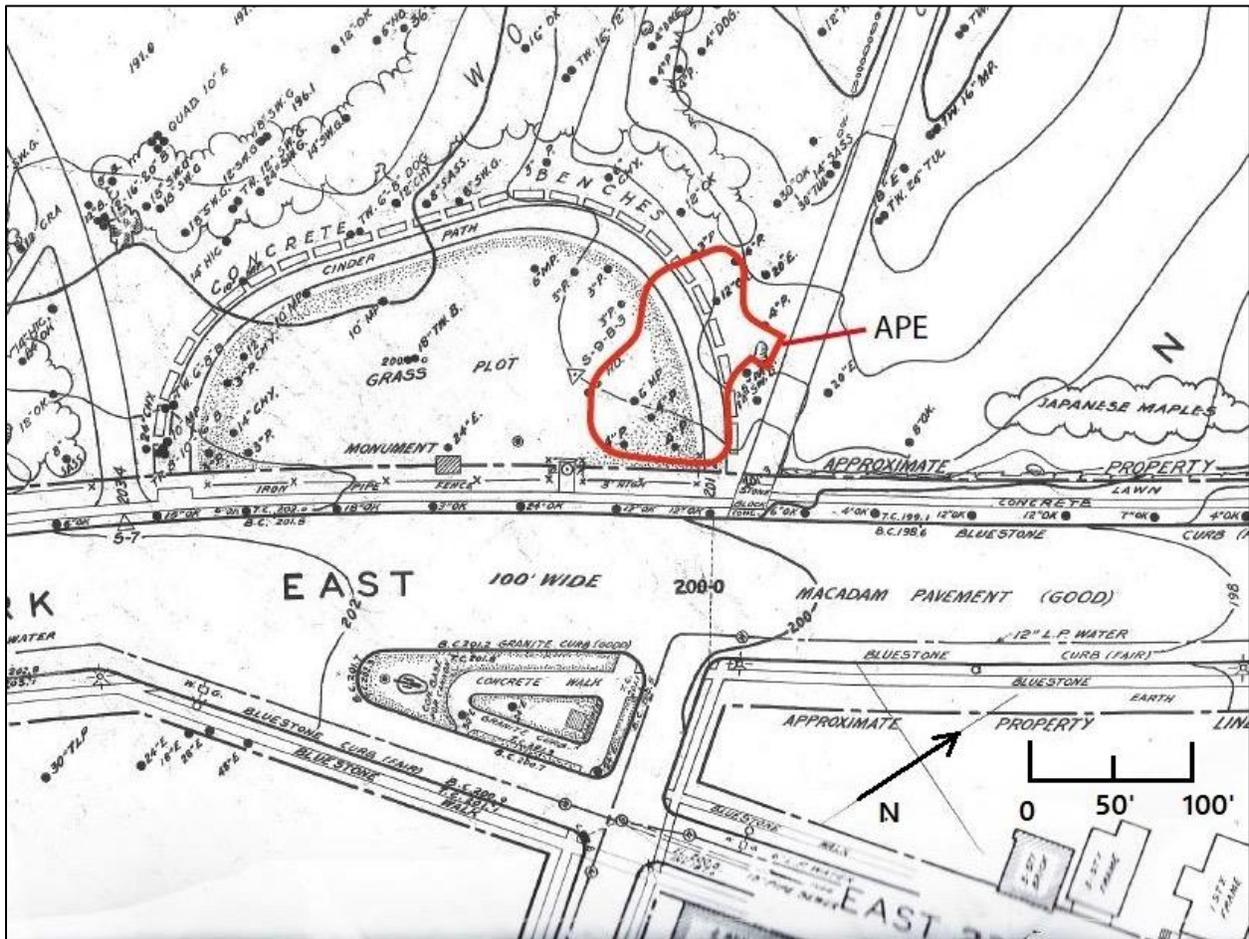
Map 22: *Maps or plans and profiles ... of the 23rd and 24th Wards of the City of New York.* (New York Topographical Bureau, 1892.)

Bromley's 1893 Atlas is the first to identify the new park by name (Map 23). It depicts the APE in the same relation to the Park boundaries as exists today. Unlike the 1892 topographical map above, the road to the east of the APE is clearly indicated on this map.



Map 23: *Atlas of the City of New York*. G.W. Bromley & Co., 1893.

A Parks Department topographical map from the 1930s shows a grassy area surrounded by concrete benches encircling the monument (Map 24). This semi-circular area measures approximately 250' along Van Cortlandt Park East, beginning from the Muir Nature Trail, and encompassing part of the APE. There is no information on whether any subsurface work was done in connection with the creation of this area, but the elevation contours and measurements are very similar to those on the 1892 Topographic Bureau map, possibly with some minor grading to make the slope more even. The only other known use of the APE is as the current dog run. It is adjacent to the entrance to a major east-west trail (now the Muir Nature Trail) and as such would have experienced some impact from the traffic using this trail prior to being fenced in as a run. The dog run has had a significant impact on the area as well, with substantial soil compaction from heavy use.



Map 24: City of New York Department of Parks 1935: Topographical Map of Portion of Van Cortlandt Park, showing grass plot within portion of APE.

The Stockbridge Indian Massacre

Some maps and secondary or tertiary historic accounts of the Stockbridge Massacre have been considered. These are pertinent due to the proximity of the APE to the reported site of the Massacre and the reported burials of those killed. The site of the encounter is described in Zaboly's 1977 account as being approximately half a mile up Van Cortlandt Park East (Mile Square Road) from the intersection of that road with 233rd Street. This would place it slightly northeast of the APE. According to Zaboly, the area was behind a gradual bend in the road (heading from 233rd Street), on a "wide flat hillock covered with fenced crops" (Zaboly 1977:72). Immediately before the road reached the hillock, a farm lane headed to the northwest, from a point opposite Oneida Avenue (Zaboly 1977:72). Presently, this is the location of the Muir Nature Trail abutting the APE. The lane itself is probably the one depicted on several nineteenth-century maps. Near the entrance to the lane was the house of Daniel Devoe and, according to Zaboly, the house of his brother Frederick was located about 1000 yards to the northwest (Map 23) (Zaboly 1977:72).

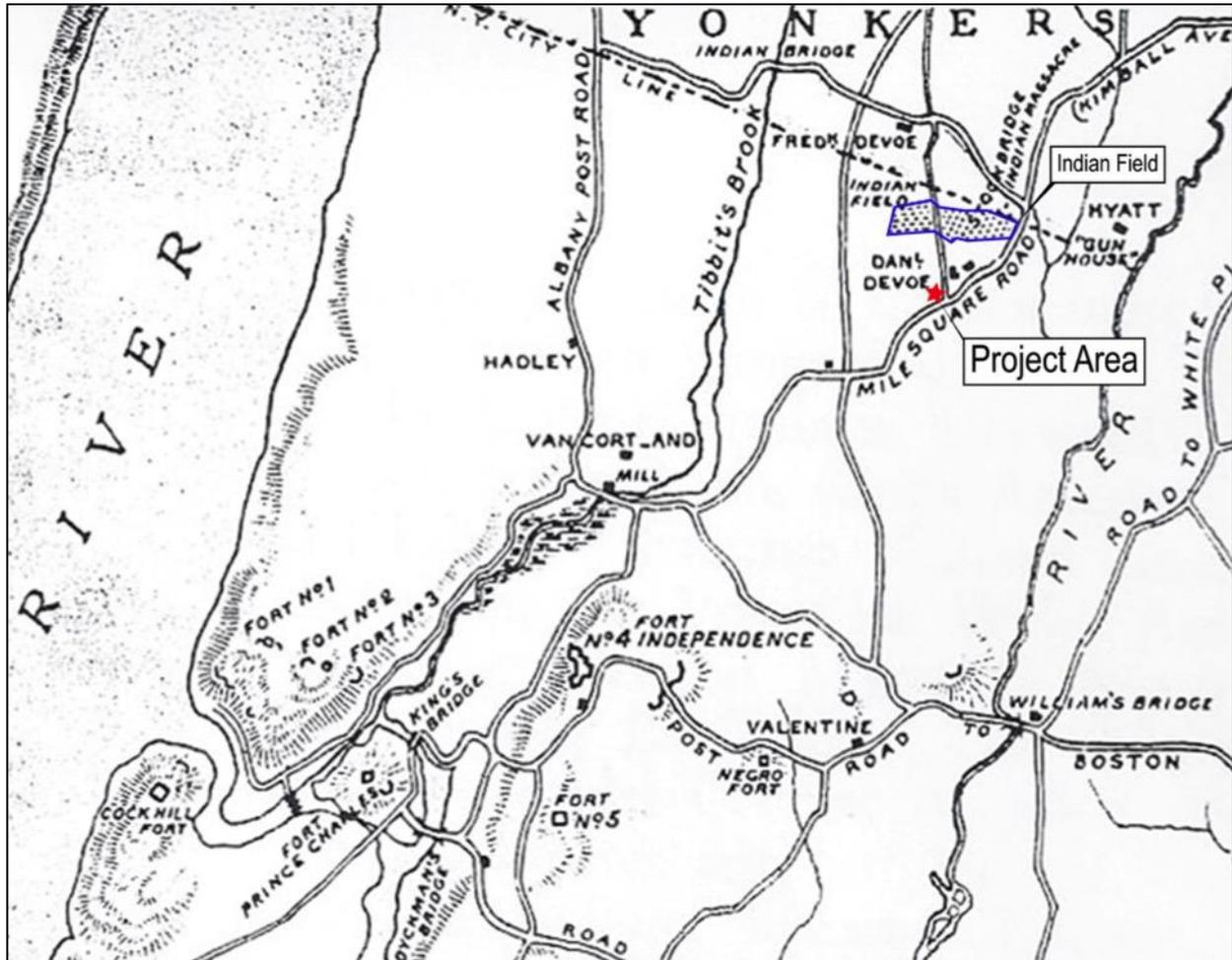
Lieutenant Colonel Simcoe's map of the battle, printed in an edition of his journal published more than 100 years after that event, depicts its location and the various movements (Map 25). Unfortunately, there is no scale with the map, and its positioning within the present-day landscape is unclear. While it shows Mile Square Road (Van Cortlandt Park East), the precise location on the road is not clearly identifiable. Zaboly asserts that the stream at the top of the map is roughly the location of present day McLean Avenue, which is approximately 0.5 miles north of the APE, in Westchester County. The map shows the position of the British troops and the course of their pursuit of the Stockbridge across the fields and into the woods probably located behind the APE.

No primary source other than the journal of Lieutenant Colonel Simcoe, as related by Zaboly, was found to contain information on the battle. All sources state that it occurred along Van Cortlandt Park East (then Mile Square Road) and to the west of that road. The proximity of the APE to the battle is confirmed by numerous references to the Devoe farm on a small farm lane, which Zaboly places opposite present-day Oneida Avenue, where the APE is situated (Map 26) (Zaboly 1977:72). The only lane heading northwest off of Mile Square Road on pre-twentieth century maps appears to be consistent with Zaboly's placement at Oneida Avenue.

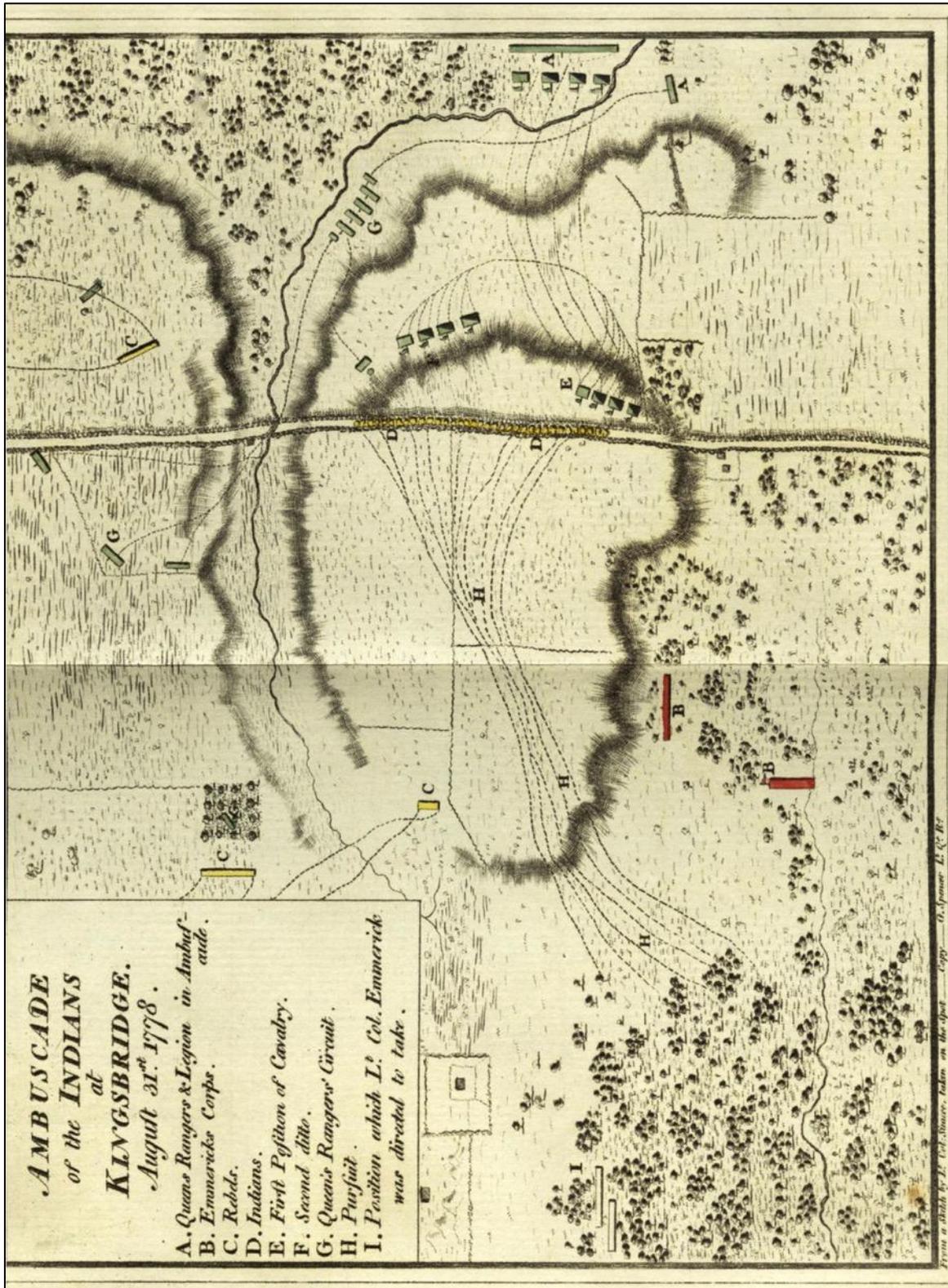
There is a section of Van Cortlandt Park that is called Indian Field, located to the southwest of the APE at the intersection of 233rd Street and Jerome Avenue. Parks signage describes this as "honoring the 17 Mohicans" who were killed during the Revolutionary War, and specifically states that they "died on this field" (Parks 2014c). However, in 1942, a Parks proposal for development in the area along Van Cortlandt Park East (which was never carried out) recommended the placement of Indian Field immediately northeast of the APE (Map 27). It also shows up on a map done in conjunction with a 1978 reenactment of the battle essentially at the location of the APE (Map 27). Edsall's 1887 map also places the battle immediately northeast of the APE, in the triangular area between Mile Square Road and the New York City/Yonkers line, labelled "Battle Field 1778" (Map 28). The Hufeland map (in Zaboly 1977) depicts Indian Field to the north of the APE (Map 29).

In 1906, the Stockbridge Indian Memorial was erected. The Memorial is located approximately 125' southwest along Van Cortlandt Park East from the Muir trail entrance. It is less than 50' from the southern side of the current dog run.

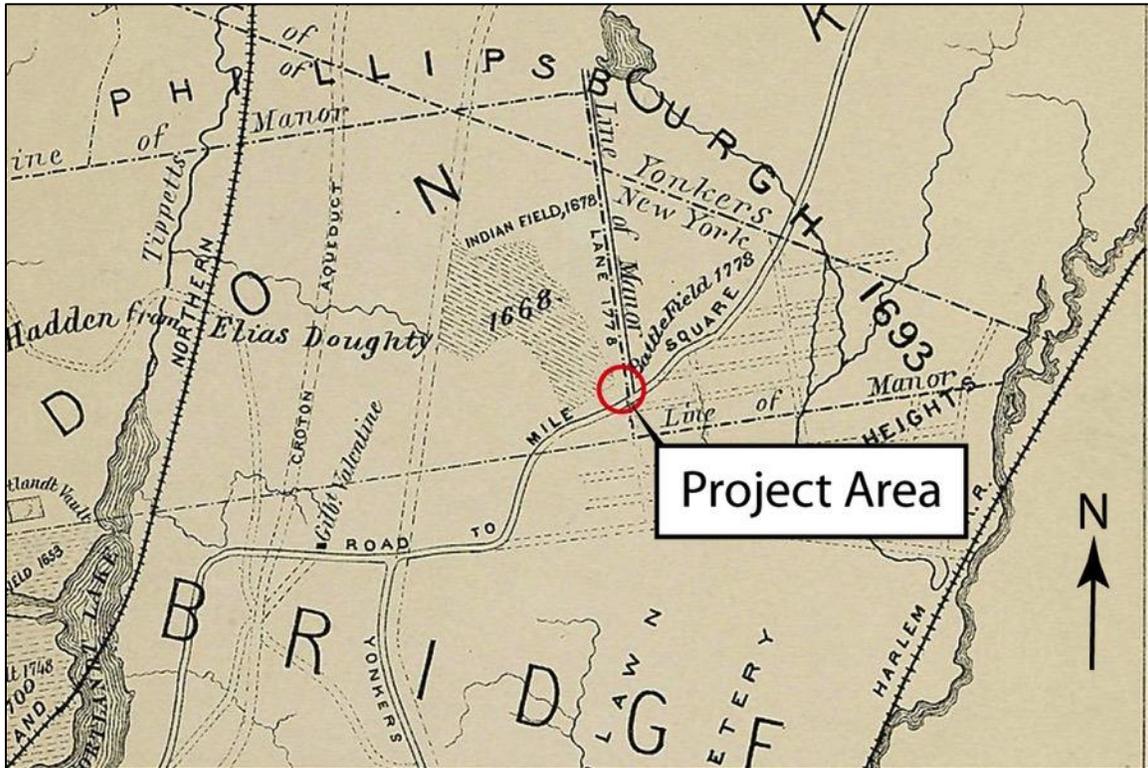
While the burial location cannot be exactly identified, it is clear that the battle occurred in the immediate vicinity of the APE, and likely impacted the project area.



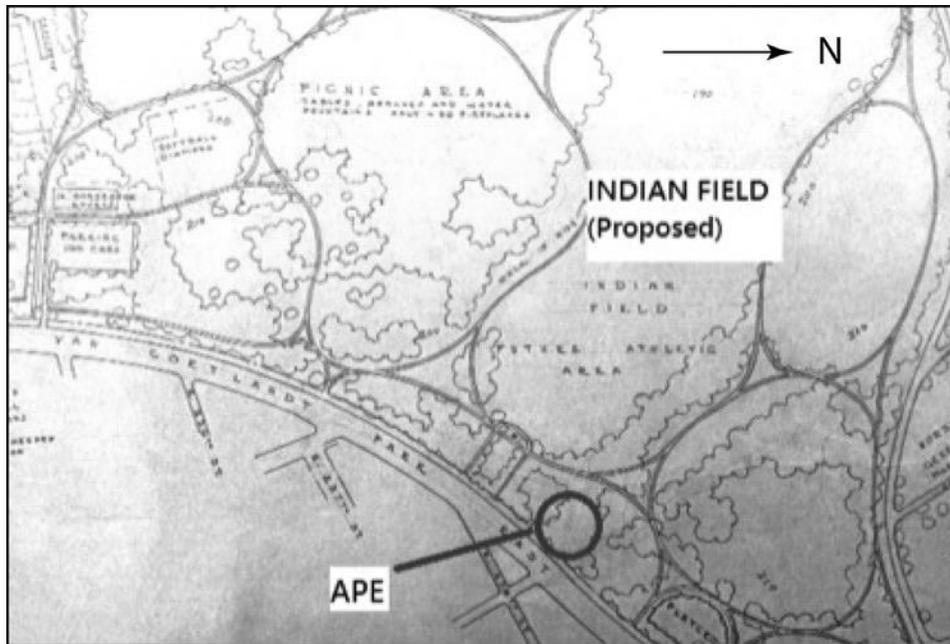
Map 25: *The Bronx in the American Revolution*
(modified from Otto Hufeland 1926 in Zaboly 1977:64).



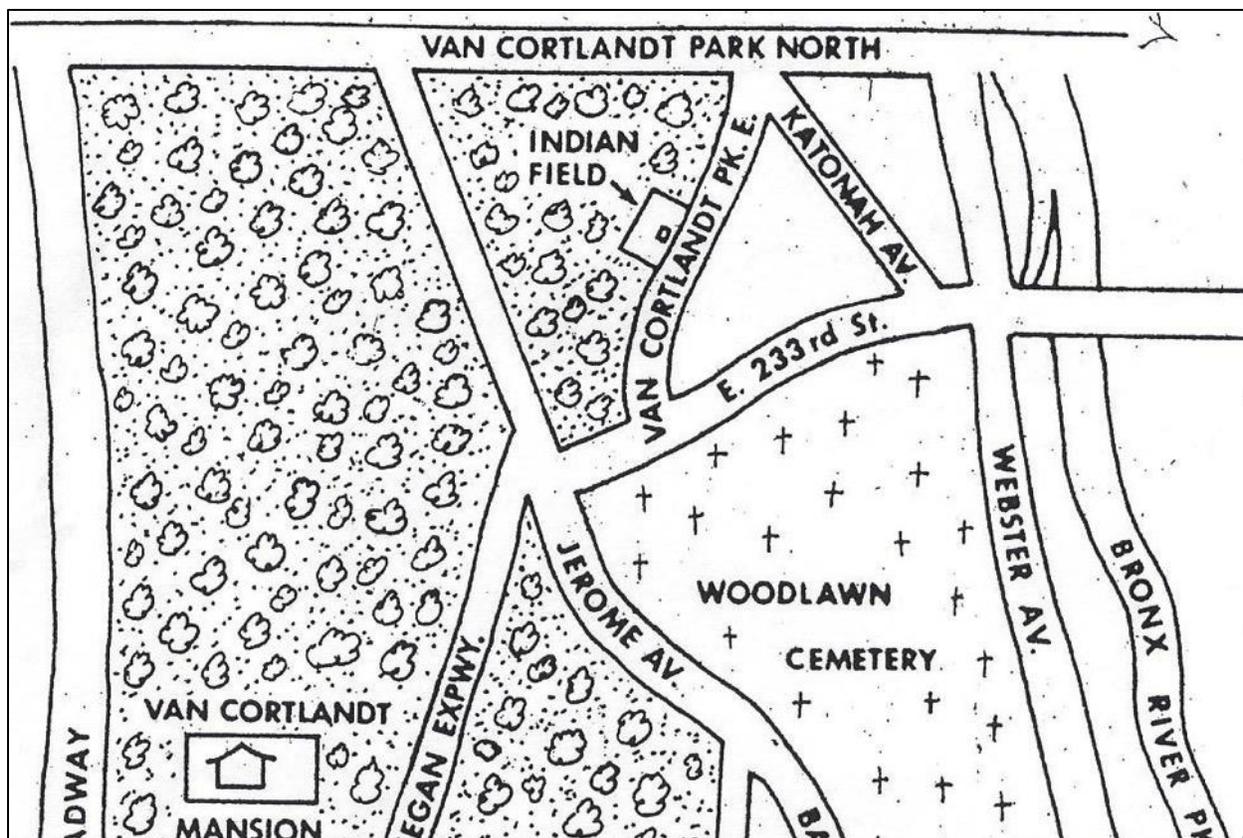
Map 26: Ambuscade of the Indians at Kingsbridge: August 31st 1778
by John Graves Simcoe (1787) (Boston Public Library).



Map 27: Historical Sketch Map of Kingsbridge, 1645-1783 (Edsall 1887:frontispiece).



Map 28: NYC Parks, Van Cortlandt Park, Borough of the Bronx, Development Plan, Section 1, February 29, 1942, showing the proposed location of Indian Field.



Map 29: Map used for the 1978 reenactment of the Stockbridge Indian Massacre, Author unknown (on file with the Bronx Historical Society).

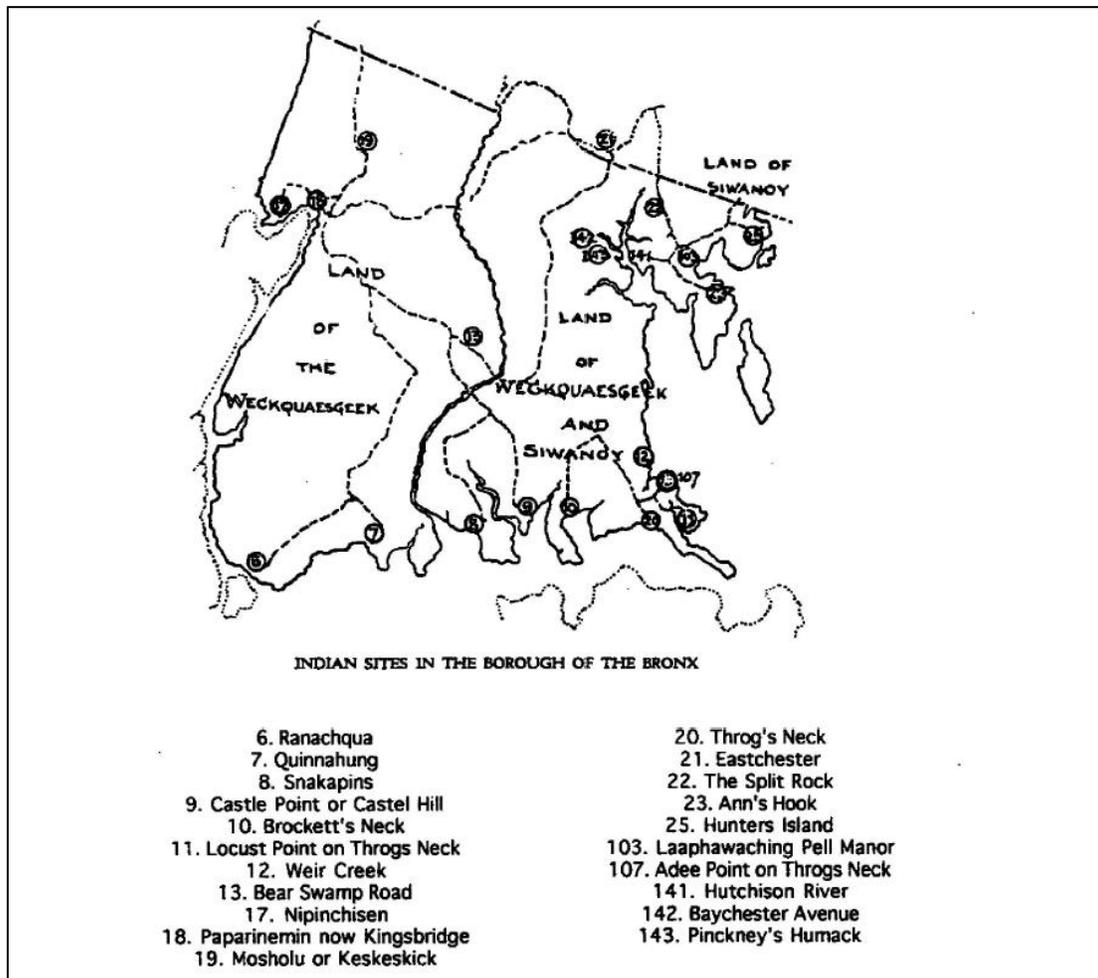
VIII. PREVIOUS CULTURAL RESOURCE STUDIES AND IDENTIFIED SITES

The APE contains no known prehistoric or historic sites or properties that are National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligible or listed. Research identified one prehistoric site in the APE vicinity (defined as within 1000 feet). In addition, there have been several cultural resource studies conducted in the larger surrounding area and within Van Cortlandt Park that have identified prehistoric and historic sites within two miles of the project area. Van Cortlandt Mansion, home to the owners of the APE property for almost two hundred years, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and is both a New York City and a National Historic landmark.

No registered historic sites were identified in the APE vicinity. The APE is within 1500' of Indian Field, the site selected to commemorate the 37 Native Americans who were massacred during the American Revolution while assisting the Continental Army. Indian Field was selected as a commemoration site during its construction as it lies within the vicinity of the battle. The Stockbridge Indian Memorial is located immediately south of the APE. There is some information suggesting that the memorial was located at the site of the largest burial pit. However, to date no conclusive evidence has been located to pinpoint the precise burial location(s).

PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED PREHISTORIC SITES

In general, the Bronx was an area of substantial Native American activity. Bolton identified at least 21 sites throughout the borough (Map 30). Four of these sites are within two miles of the APE (Table 01). In addition to these sites, shell middens have been found at several locations throughout the Bronx, including Marble Hill, Spuyten Duyvil Hill, Pelham Knolls, Pelham Boulder, Throgs Neck, Kaeser, Dyckman Street, Clasons Point, Oakland Lake and Riverdale Park (Rothschild and Matthews 1993:8-9). Shell heaps from these sites are generally large, from one to five feet in depth and up to one acre in surface area (Rothschild and Matthews 1993:8). Ritchie characterizes the locations of such middens as typically on “the second rise of ground above high-water level on tidal inlets” (Ritchie 1980:271). Petrographs have been identified along the Bronx River, and a quartz quarry site is present at the Chapel Farm Estate (Rothschild and Matthews 1993:9; HPI 1991). Native American artifacts have been recovered from several other areas, including 232nd Street at the Hudson River, Kappock Street and the Henry Hudson Parkway and the Harlem Canal near Broadway (Ricciardi 1997; Rothschild and Matthews 1993:9; HPI 1987:11). Five village sites have also been identified in the Bronx, one within Van Cortlandt Park and four in the southwestern Bronx (Rothschild and Matthews 1993:9; Bolton 1934:141; Parker 1922:93-94).



Map 30: Map of Native American sites in the Bronx (Bolton 1934:136).

Table 01: Previously identified prehistoric sites within two miles of the APE.

SITE NAME & NUMBER	SITE LOCATION	TIME PERIOD	SITE TYPE	SOURCE
NYSM 2837	within 1000 feet of APE	unknown	camp	NYSHPO
NYSM 2823 - Mosholu/Keskeskick	Van Cortlandt Park Parade Grounds	Late Woodland	village site	Bolton 1934:141; Parker 1922:93-94
NYSM 4056 - The Hudson River Path	Van Cortlandt Park Parade Grounds	unknown prehistoric	path	Parker 1922:91-94
NYSM 7727	Van Cortlandt Park Parade Grounds	unknown prehistoric	camp, fire pits	JAM 2007:3

The site closest to the APE, NYSM 2837, is a campsite of unknown temporal period. The NYSHPO identifies that the site location is within 1000 feet of the APE, but there is no further information available.

The largest known prehistoric site within two miles of the APE is the Mosholu or Keskeskick Village site (NYSM 2823). The site was originally identified in the late nineteenth century, during initial grading for the Parade Grounds, and was investigated in 1890 by J.B. James. Several bowl-shaped pits and 13 burials were exposed over a fourteen acre area. The pits predominately contained oyster shell, along with some clam, mussel and scallop. Animal bones, pottery and charcoal and ash were also found. The site has been dated to the Late Woodland period based on ceramic chronology (JMA 2007:3; Smith 1950:169; Skinner 1920). The agricultural use of the site by Native Americans is documented in Dutch colonial records (Grumet 1981:19; Tieck 1968:3). Studies of the site conducted during recent cultural resource investigations are discussed below.

Two other identified sites are located within the Parade Grounds: the Westchester or Hudson River Path (NYSM 4056) and NYSM 7727, a camp site. Parker described the Hudson River Path as entering the Park on a straight northward course, then finding a “practicable” crossing of the Mosholu Brook at 242nd Street (Parker 1922:93). The trail continued north along Broadway to Westchester County (Bolton 1972:136).

PREVIOUS CULTURAL RESOURCE STUDIES

This section discusses some of the cultural resources/archaeological studies undertaken within two miles of the APE. Almost all of these studies have occurred within Van Cortlandt Park. Work has been done in five areas within the Park – the Parade Ground, the Van Cortlandt Mansion, the Croton Aqueduct, the Mosholu Golf Course and the Schandler Recreation Area – as well as immediately north of the Park in Westchester County. The Schandler Recreation Area and the Croton Aqueduct projects are the closest to the APE. For a listing of all site reports on the Van Cortlandt Park area see Table 02.

Schandler Recreation Area

In 1998, Historical Perspectives, Inc. (HPI) conducted a Phase IA Documentary Study of the Schandler Recreation Area approximately one half mile to the southwest of the APE, between the Major Deegan Expressway and Jerome Avenue. This site was one of several proposed for the construction of a water filtration plant for the Croton water system. The report found that due to substantial Native American activity in the area and the lack of disturbance in several portions of the APE, there was high potential for the recovery of prehistoric resources (HPI 1998a:16-17).

Croton Aqueduct

The New Croton Aqueduct (NCA), completed in 1891, passes through Van Cortlandt Park to the west of the APE, between the project area and Tibbets Brook. The original aqueduct, constructed in 1842, also passed through the same general area. In 2004, HPI conducted a Phase IA documentary study of 35 shaft sites along the entire length of the Aqueduct between Manhattan and its source at the Croton River in Westchester County. Four of the sites were within two miles of the APE, including two shaft sites and a gatehouse within Van Cortlandt Park. Shaft 195/8 was approximately one half mile to the southwest of the APE. The study concludes that the area was probably an “ideal locale” for precontact activity (HPI 2004:VI-66). The recommendations also included finding the NCA and associated structures eligible for listing on the National and State Register of Historic Places.

Van Cortlandt Mansion

Several cultural resource studies and archaeological investigations have been carried out at or around the Van Cortlandt Mansion. The Mansion is a New York City Landmark, a National Historical Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is located approximately one and a half miles to the southwest of the APE. It was the residence of the Van Cortlandt family, the owners of the property on which the APE is located, from 1748 to 1888. The family residence was probably located in the same immediate area prior to the construction of the extant mansion. The site may also have been the location of the residence of the earliest European owner of the property, Adrian Van Der Donck. Excavations in 1910 and in the early 1990s, discussed below, uncovered portions of a stone foundation that likely belonged to the Van Der Donck house or the early Van Cortlandt residence.

In 1910, workers replacing a sewer line to the south of the mansion discovered a stone foundation. Dutch style artifacts were recovered, including tin glazed earthenwares, clay pipes and red Holland bricks, along with leaded window frames with thin glass (Ultan 1984:14). The foundation may have been from the home of the original Dutch owner, Adrian Van Der Donck, or the foundation of the George Tippet home included with the sale of the property to Jacobus Van Cortlandt (Rothschild and Matthews 1993:14).

In 1985, Louis Berger and Associates (Berger) conducted archaeological testing along the west wall of the mansion's south wing, where a stairway and dry well were planned. The testing consisted of three shovel test pits (STPs) done within a small area, less than 150 square feet (Berger 1985:1). No features were identified and all recovered artifacts were found in fill (Berger 1985:5).

Berger also carried out archaeological testing in 1987, in connection with the proposed installation of sewage and plumbing infrastructure near the mansion. This involved nine shovel test units, seven in the east yard of the house and two in the west garden. This testing recovered some late seventeenth-century artifacts, none of which were in a defined primary context, and no features. Both areas had been subject to previous disturbance, either for utility installation or in connection with gardening activities.

Excavations in several locations around the Van Cortlandt Mansion, including within the gardens and around the house foundations, were undertaken by Brooklyn College over the course of three field seasons (1990 to 1992). Excavation exposed a seventeenth-century foundation wall believed to have been a remnant of Van der Donck house. The most significant finds were two subterranean stone structures and associated refuse deposits (Bankoff, Winter and Ricciardi 1992:7-9). The deposits, probably the result of one to a few nearly-contemporaneous dumping episodes, contained chronologically mixed mid eighteenth- to late nineteenth-century artifacts (Bankoff, Winter, and Ricciardi 1992:9). The artifacts likely came from discrete locations within the mansion and were discarded at the time the property was transferred to the City (Bankoff, Winter and Ricciardi 1992:9; Ricciardi 1997). These finds and the overall environmental movement, including large scale landscape transformations of what would become the Park, are explored further by Ricciardi in his Masters Thesis published in 1997 (Ricciardi 1997).

Parade Grounds

The Parade Grounds are located on the west side of Van Cortland Park, just east of Broadway near West 251st Street. Prior to cultural resource studies being carried out at this location, the Parade Grounds had been identified as the site of a Native American village (Parker 1920:488). The area was investigated in 1910 by J.B. James, who identified several shell and refuse pits and 13 burials. In 1993, Nan Rothschild and Christopher Matthews of Columbia University excavated several test units in conjunction with the proposed construction of six tennis courts on the Parade Grounds. The report concluded that while the area had been occupied continuously and used as a planting field since the Late Woodland period, due to the late nineteenth-century grading, any archaeological deposits in the area had been disturbed, and the testing did not identify any intact resources. The report, however, identified potential impact to the broader historic landscape, and recommended the assessment of the Mansion, Parade Ground, Vault Hill and the surrounding landscape for status as an expanded Historic Landmark.

Another investigation conducted by Arthur Bankoff and Frederick Winter in 1990 - 1991 identified Native American resources in this area (Bankoff and Winter 1992). Four 2 meter by 2 meter test trenches and thirty-six auger tests were performed, recovering chert and flint nodules and Native American pottery. The artifacts were determined to be in secondary context (Bankoff and Winter 1992:1).

More recently, in 2007, John Milner and Associates (JMA) prepared a Phase I study of the Parade Grounds and monitored the mechanical excavation of three test units prior to the installation of a drainage and irrigation system and the reconstruction of several recreational facilities. Three prehistoric sites were identified within the Parade Grounds, including the village site and fire pits discussed above, and a Native American path. The path headed north from Manhattan into Van Cortlandt Park, crossing the Mosholu Brook around 242nd Street and connecting to the village at the Parade Grounds (JMA 2007:4). The report concluded that the site had the potential to contain both prehistoric village features and remains from historic structures and recommended further testing.

In 2009, JMA conducted Phase IB archaeological testing in the Parade Grounds, based on the recommendations in their Phase I study. The work consisted of mechanical stripping and mechanical excavation of 28 trenches, and the excavation of 8 STPs (JMA 2009:3). Over 400 artifacts were recovered, including 11 Native American artifacts (JMA 2009:3). The latter consisted of debitage, stone cores, and fire cracked rock. All of the artifacts were recovered from within fill (JMA 2009:3). In addition, four features were identified, all of which were pit features. The nature of these pits was not ascertainable, and JMA recommended further testing (JMA 2009:16). It is not known whether any additional testing was carried out.

Mosholu Golf Course

The Mosholu Golf course, originally opened in 1914, is located more than a mile to the southwest of the APE. In 2004, HPI undertook a Phase IA documentary study in preparation for a proposed water treatment plant and associated tunnels and other infrastructure. The project site was located at the southeast corner of the Park, within the triangle formed by the intersection of Jerome Road and West Gun Hill Road. The report found that because of the substantial pre-contact activity in the area, the site had high potential for the recovery of prehistoric resources, despite some ground disturbance and the “continuously evolving recreational landscape” (HPI 2004a:25)⁴. Based on the report findings, Phase IB testing was undertaken, consisting of over 300 shovel test pits with test arrays around 8 of the units that contained some prehistoric material (HPI 2004b:3). The initial material recovered from the STPs consisted of isolated chert and quartz flakes and one pottery sherd (HPI 2004b:4). Further testing done in the vicinity of these finds failed to reveal any additional material (HPI 2004b:4).

⁴ This report was done as part of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). An earlier IA Documentary Study done by HPI in connection with the initial EIS did not find any pre-contact archaeological potential due to the disturbance caused during the creation of the golf course (HPI 1998:18).

Table 02: Previous CRM Reports on works in the vicinity of the project area.

DATE	REPORT TITLE	AUTHOR
1985	Archaeological Testing of the Proposed Egress Stair and Dry well excavation, Van Cortlandt Mansion, Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx, New York	Louis Berger and Associates, Inc.
1986	Van Cortlandt Park – Borough of the Bronx – Restoration Master Plan for the City of New York – Department of Parks and Recreation	Storch Associates
1987	Phase I Archaeological Investigation of Proposed Sewage/Plumbing Lines and Seepage Basin at Van Cortlandt Mansion, Broadway and 242 nd Street, Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx, New York	Louis Berger and Associates, Inc.
1992	Van Cortlandt House Excavations, 1990 and 1991	Bankoff, H. Arthur and Frederick A. Winter
1993	Archaeological Excavations at Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx, New York 1990-1992	Bankoff, H. Arthur, Frederick A. Winter and Christopher Ricciardi
1993	Phase IA-IB Archaeological Investigations of the Proposed Area for the Construction of Six Tennis Courts on the Parade Grounds of Van Cortlandt Park, The Bronx, New York.	Rothschild, Nan and Christopher Matthews
1993	Stage IA Archaeological Assessment – The New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, New York	Historical Perspectives, Inc.
1997	From Private To Public: The Changing Landscape of Van Cortlandt Park; Bronx, New York In The Nineteenth Century	Ricciardi, Christopher
1998	Cultural Resource Assessment – Proposed Croton Water Treatment Plant, Croton Woods Site, Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx County, New York	Historical Perspectives, Inc.
1998	Cultural Resource Assessment – Proposed Croton Water Treatment Plant, Mosholu Site, Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx County, New York	Historical Perspectives, Inc.
1998	Cultural Resource Assessment – Proposed Croton Water Treatment Plant, Shandler Recreation Area, Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx County, New York	Historical Perspectives, Inc.
1998	Cultural Resource Assessment, Croton Water Treatment Plant, Gate House No. 1., Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx, New York	Historical Perspectives, Inc.
2004	Phase IB Archaeological Testing – Croton Water Treatment Plant, Mosholu Golf Course, Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx County, New York	Historical Perspectives, Inc.

DATE	REPORT TITLE	AUTHOR
2004	Cultural Resource Assessment, Croton Water Treatment Plant, Mosholu Golf Course, Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx, New York.	Historical Perspectives, Inc.
2004	Phase IB Archaeological Testing, Croton Water Treatment Plant, Mosholu Golf Course, Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx, New York.	Historical Perspectives, Inc.
2004	Cultural Resource Assessment, New Croton Aqueduct Rehabilitation Shaft Sites, Westchester, Bronx, and New York County, New York (CEQR: 04DEP134X)	Historical Perspectives, Inc.
2005	The Archaeology of Slavery at Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx, New York	Bankoff, H. Arthur and Frederick A. Winter
2007	Van Cortlandt Park Parade Ground Phase IA Archaeological Investigation, Borough of the Bronx, New York	John Milner and Associates
2009	Van Cortlandt Park – Parade Ground – Phase IB Archaeological Survey, Borough of the Bronx, New York	John Milner and Associates
2009	Phase IA Archaeological Assessment 801 Co-op City Boulevard, Block 5140, Part of Lot 270, Bronx, Bronx County, New York	Historical Perspectives, Inc.

IX. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the Phase IA is to determine the potential for the recovery of significant intact cultural resources within the APE. Significance is determined by whether a site and/or its associated resources may potentially be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or as a New York City Landmark.

National Register Criteria for Evaluation may be summarized as:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and:

- a. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- b. That are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or

- c. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- d. That has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

Based on this criteria, the project area may contain both National Register and New York City Landmark resources that would be impacted by the proposed construction activities on site. Due to the proximity of prehistoric and historic sites and events, there is a moderate to high potential for the recovery of prehistoric and historic cultural resource material remains and/or stratigraphic levels.

PREHISTORIC RESOURCES

Four previously identified nearby prehistoric sites are listed with the New York State Museum; one of these is within 1000 feet of the APE. NYSM 2837 is listed as a campsite, but no further information was available.

The three other archaeological sites are located within two miles of the APE, within Van Cortlandt Park. NYSM 2823, a village site; NYSM 4056, a path and NYSM 7727, a camp site are located at the Parade Ground, on the opposite side of the Park from the APE. Though not listed as sites with the New York State Museum several other excavations within the Park have recovered Native American materials.

Evidence of prehistoric occupation in the Bronx, including in the area surrounding the APE, is substantial. In addition to the four previously-identified sites and other Native American resources that have been found within Van Cortlandt Park, there are more than a dozen sites throughout the Bronx. Because of the documented Native American use of the area, the results of previous archaeological studies within the Park and the nearby camp site, the APE is determined to have a moderate sensitivity for the recovery of prehistoric resources.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

According to map analysis, the immediate APE did not contain any historic structures or undergo any historical development. Maps indicate that the Daniel Devoe house was nearby during the mid-eighteenth century, but the impact this property may have had on the APE is undetermined.

Though the APE is a small area, it is located at the junction of two roads. At least one of these roads, Van Cortlandt Park East, was present by the time of the early European occupation of the Bronx. The analysis of Parks topographic maps do not suggest that any significant grading has occurred in the project area or its vicinity. A portion of the APE is a naturalized environment, and the area of the existing dog run, though highly compacted, does not appear to have been altered or modified in any substantial manner. Therefore, there is potential to uncover portions of this historic roadway as part of the projected project.

Historic accounts note that the Stockbridge Indian Massacre occurred in or near the APE. The massacre was a Revolutionary War era battle that resulted in the deaths and burial of several dozen Stockbridge Native Americans. There are unsupported accounts stating that the extant monument nearby the APE (less than 150' away) was erected over the largest burial pit. The location of the project area within, or within the immediate vicinity of, the Stockbridge Indian Massacre coupled with the lack of any significant modifications or grading to the area leads to a determination of high sensitivity for the recovery of historic resources.

CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

The construction plans were not available for review, but construction impact depths are estimated to be approximately 12" or less throughout the majority of the project area. Some areas will realize a 24" impact. Impacts will be largely isolated to the perimeter of the proposed dog run for fence installation, the removal of several large trees, the installation of water lines for drinking fountains and the removal of forested growth at the rear portion of the APE.

RECOMMENDATION

Although the construction impacts may appear to be minimal, due to the lack of modification and grading to the area there is a potential that the construction of the proposed dog run may impact pre-historic and/or historic resources in areas where excavation will occur for the curbs, particularly in areas where that impact will extend to 24". It is recommended that a program of Phase IB Archaeological Testing be implemented in impact areas in the form of Standardized Test Pits (STPs) to assess the stratigraphic integrity of the area and determine if, along with stratigraphic levels, *in situ* cultural material remains are present. Depending on the method of tree stump removal, archaeological monitoring may be required for this activity in addition to the testing.

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